

DANISH ROYAL PROCLAMATION

MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 2024

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King Frederik and Queen Mary on the balcony of Christiansborg Palace in Copenhagen and (inset) sharing a kiss. Pictures: Jonathan Nackstrand

8-PAGE SOUVENIR EDITION

ARISE, QUEEN MARY

Danes herald a new era
as beloved Aussie begins
her reign with a kiss

CROWNING GLORY

All the colour from
Denmark as Mary
ascends the throne

SUPPORTING CAST

Inside the inner circle
guiding the new
Queen's every move

MAKING HISTORY

Mary's unlikely journey
from Tassie girl to
European royalty



A moment of majesty as our Mary ascends Danish throne

WITH THE EYES OF THE WORLD UPON HER, AUSTRALIAN-BORN MARY DONALDSON WAS OFFICIALLY CROWNED QUEEN OF DENMARK AS HER HUSBAND FREDERIK WAS PROCLAIMED KING

Danielle Gusmaroli, in Copenhagen, and David Mills

It started with a kiss. Denmark's new King Frederik and Queen Mary have sealed the start of their reign with a kiss, delighting spectators at Christiansborg Palace, who turned out on the streets of Copenhagen in their thousands despite the freezing conditions.

Danes sang their national anthem and cheered their new King, who wiped away tears after his reign was proclaimed by Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

"Long live His Majesty King Frederik the Tenth," she told the crowd, before leading them in a chant of support for the new monarch.

In a short speech to the crowd, King Frederik honoured the service of his mother, Queen Margrethe, who abdicated after 52 years on the Danish throne.

Reading from a prepared statement, King Frederik said it was "my hope to be a great king". He said he was "connected, obligated and for the kingdom of Denmark".

"I have respect, pride; I need all the support I can get," he said.

After the speech the Danish people got their first look at their new Queen, Mary, supremely elegant in a simple white dress with a matching scarf and belt. She emerged on to the balcony at Christiansborg Palace amid a great roar from the crowd and smiled and waved happily.

She was followed by the heir, Crown Prince Christian, then Princesses Isabella and Josephine, and Prince Vincent.

Queen Mary and King Frederik were both seen to feel the emotion of the moment, holding their hands above their chests. They also joined hands above their heads.



Queen Mary and King Frederik wave to well-wishers as they travel by carriage from Christiansborg Palace back to their home at Amalienborg Palace.

The kiss was greeted with another big roar from the crowd, but also calls for "more".

Earlier, Queen Margrethe formalised her abdication with a simple stroke of her signature on a document during a meeting of the Council of State, with King Frederik by her side and Crown Prince Christian next to him. It was not immediately apparent where Queen Mary stood at the moment of abdication — an event that has not happened in Denmark for 900 years.

Images of the moment showed a solemn and poignant occasion.

Dressed in a burgundy suit, Queen Margrethe departed the room with a walking stick for support, while King Frederik took his place at the head of the table.

Her 52 years on the throne had made her the world's longest-serving monarch, a record she had held since the death of her third cousin, Britain's Queen Elizabeth, in September 2022.

An estimated 150,000 Danes braved freezing temperatures to line the streets on Sunday to catch a glimpse of Queen Margrethe in her last act as

monarch, making her way to Christiansborg Castle in a mahogany carriage escorted by 48 horses from the Guard Hussar Regiment's Mounted Squadron. Media from 79 countries covered the event, with the huge crowds and the spectacle contradicting earlier predictions it would be an event without much pomp and ceremony.

Perth resident Dennis Konig was one of many Australian spectators, saying: "We have a royal queen from Australia who we're all proud of".

Former Melbourne Lucas Kraeddergaard, 33, from Copenhagen, was also in the crowd at Christiansborg Palace.

"Queen Margrethe's abdication is a moment in history I'll never see again in my lifetime," he said. "Duty has characterised her reign,



Crown Prince Christian

The new prince of hearts

Crown Prince Christian set hearts ablaze as the new heir to the throne of Denmark became the most eligible bachelor in Europe.

The 18-year-old was the striking image of his father King Frederik X, who Prince Christian replaced as the first in the royal family's line of succession.

Tens of thousands who lined the streets erupted in

cheers as Christian stepped out to join his parents in his first official public appearance as Crown Prince.

Queen Mary's eldest son has been fending off rumours he's dating a glamorous Italian Princess Maria Chiara di Borbone delle Due Sicilie.

But after Princess Maria issued a wistful denial of a relationship, all eyes turned toward the newly-proclaimed

heir to one of Europe's longest-lasting thrones.

Prince Christian joined his father and mother on the balcony of Christiansborg Palace 24 years after their own fairy tale romance began during the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Earlier he sat next to the King at the Council of State where Queen Margrethe II signed the official abdication.



Queen Margrethe II.

Queen's tearful final act

Europe's longest-serving monarch was brought to tears as she used her final act as Queen to officially sign the future of the Denmark Royal House to King Frederik X and Crown Prince Christian.

The 83-year-old, who sat on the throne since 1972, was visibly emotional as she signed the Declaration of Abdication and stepped away from her son and grandson as the country's new head of state and heir.

At that moment, the 52-year reign of Queen Margrethe II ended with her final words "long live the King". It marked the first day of the reign of King Frederik.

The succession came two weeks after Queen Margrethe II — who in the past had said she would remain on the throne for life — stunned the country on New Year's Eve when she announced her decision to abdicate.





Frederik and Mary make their royal debut as King and Queen of Denmark shortly after Queen Margrethe (top right) stepped down by signing a declaration of her abdication alongside her son. Earlier, crowds lined the streets of Copenhagen (right) to cheer on the couple as they made their way to Christiansborg Palace for the historic occasion. Pictures: AFP



King Frederik and Queen Mary with their children Isabella, Christian, Josephine and Vincent on the balcony of Christiansborg Palace.

we're indebted to her. And we're excited about getting a new reign.

"Everyone loves Queen Mary. I've met her several times and whenever she hears my Aussie accent she tells me 'That's so nice.'"

Sydney-born Andrew Mina, 43, and his daughter Annika, 12, who live in Copenhagen, said they had camped out early to see the celebrations. They had both met the royal couple, and Annika plays football with the couple's youngest twin daughter, Princess Josephine.

"We're excited to be getting a new reign and an Australian queen," Mr Mina said.

Annika said of her teammate: "Princess Josephine has been training hard and is really quite good at football and plays attacker. She's really

friendly and nice. I sometimes see her mum sitting in the car waiting to pick her up after football - they're a pretty cool family," she said.

The transition was put into immediate effect when Queen Margrethe signed a declaration of her abdication in front of the Danish Council of State, as well as Frederik and Mary and their eldest son, Christian, 18, who is now the direct heir to the throne.

While there was no official Australian presence at a brief levée (ceremony) following the Council of State meeting, Queen Mary had a reminder of her former home in the presence of her sister Jane Stephens, a Hobart-based pharmacist who is also godmother to Crown Prince Christian. Mary's father John

Donaldson was unable to attend because of poor health.

Danes got their first glimpse of King Frederik X and Queen Mary when they were proclaimed on the balcony by Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. Afterwards, the royal couple travelled via carriage to the family abode within Amalienborg Palace.

Crowds jammed the octagonal square outside Amalienborg hoping for a glimpse of their new-look royal family, with the photogenic and still-young ruling couple (Frederik is 55, Mary 51) at its heart.

The occasion was marked by cannon shots at the entrance to Copenhagen Harbour, the raising of the royal flag, and later, a massive fireworks display over the city.

Britain's King Charles was among the other monarchs who sent a message of congratulations, saying that along with his wife, Queen Camilla, "I look forward to working with you on ensuring that the enduring bond between our countries, and our families, remains strong, and to working together with you on issues which matter so much for our countries and the wider world."

He paid tribute to the "many years of service" of Queen Margrethe in his public statement, and wrote to her privately, as well.

Celebrations are set to continue with a parliamentary reception today and a mass next Sunday.

Hobart-born Mary's path to the Danish crown began in the year 2000, soon after she met

the then-Prince Frederik in a Sydney bar during the Olympic Games.

Their courtship stayed secret until November 2001, when a Danish magazine revealed Mary's identity.

Mary officially became a princess in 2004 upon her marriage to Frederik, and she came to be highly regarded by both the Danish people and Queen Margrethe, who saw her as a rock anchoring her previously flighty husband.

With three in four Danes in support of the current system, Mary takes her place at the head of one of Europe's most beloved monarchies, at a time when support for royalty in Holland, Sweden and Spain is plummeting. Of Europe's major royal houses, only Norway eclipses Denmark in

favourable polling numbers.

But the timing is awkward. Queen Margrethe's surprise decision to abdicate, after earlier saying she intended never to do so, and the haste with which the handover happened, fuelled rival conspiracy theories: one that she is in poorer health than previously believed; and the other suggesting the transition was done to sideline recent gossip that Frederik had had an affair with a Mexican socialite in Spain, a claim which that woman denied.

The crowning of the new king and queen is already creating speculation that a state visit to Australia could be on the cards, although a 2024 trip is considered unlikely because of the planned official visit by King Charles and Queen Camilla.

Two countries bound together by a crown

Charles Miranda

Aussie-born Mary's ascension as Queen of Denmark was the jewel in the crown that will forever tie the two nations from opposite sides of the world, according to expat Danes in Australia.

Australia's smodest but passionately proud Danish community was always going to celebrate the once-in-a-

generation crowning of a new king and queen.

But they did so on Sunday with added gusto for the Queen from Down Under, toasting the bonus connection with Akvavit snaps and pickled herring and cucumber Smorrebrod open sandwiches.

"The Danish community is of course very excited, everyone is really supporting it and for me (Margrethe) has

been the only queen I've ever known and I'm only in my 40s, so it's definitely a once-in-a-generation kind of event," The Danish Club vice president Lykke Borup said.

"Having that Australian connection (Mary) is now also just making it more exciting for us here. Frederik and Mary ... are such a power couple so I think it's perfect timing for the royal family. They will put

Denmark more on the map."

The 134-year-old Danish Club is one of the oldest cultural clubs in Australia and is usually closed this time of year but opened its Melbourne headquarters for a succession celebration. Ms Borup, an award-winning jeweller, has her own personal connection with the royals with her family's jewellery business in Denmark making pieces for the

royal family, including Mary.

Ex-pat Dane Rasmus Fiedler, who runs social and cultural gatherings under the banner Young Vikings in Town, also has a royal connection having met Frederik and Mary in 2011 during a royal visit to Australia.

"It's great for us in Australia to have an Australian-born queen, they are so popular compared to the English royal family," he said.



Lykke Borup, Nick Procter and Ingrid Geoghegan celebrate.

Never a hair out of right royal place

HER HAIRDRESSER HAS CUT AND RUN BUT A LOYAL RETINUE OF ASSISTANTS, ADVISERS AND STAFFERS IS STILL STANDING BY TO SHAPE QUEEN MARY'S REGAL HOUSEHOLD

Zoe Smith and
Danielle Gusmaroli

Behind every photograph, speech delivered, social media post placed and ribbon cut is an army of royal specialists guiding our Mary in Denmark.

As many as a dozen people form the Tasmanian-born royal's inner circle. Some have been there from the day she arrived in Copenhagen. Others will join her as she embarks on her new role as queen.

And with the shock abdication of Queen Margrethe – described by Danish royal expert Trine Villemann as “a bomb that just blew up” – the then Princess Mary received some explosive news of her own.

Her longstanding hairdresser was moving on.

But there is still a loyal contingent of assistants, advisers and staffers standing by to shape her new regal household.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Steen Evald has long been

Queen Mary's go-to photographer for official portraits and private family images.

The Dane's ability to make her feel relaxed and at ease is evident in the shots he has taken.

Mr Evald, who has regularly snapped her on royal tours and visits, has also taken portraits of Crown Prince Christian, Princess Isabella, Princess Josephine and Prince Vincent, during his two decades as the royal family's official photographer.

The photographer said he had “shared many tender moments” with the family over the years.

“I have been the preferred photographer for the Crown Prince couple for 20 years and they are beautiful people to photograph,” he said.

“I have watched their

children grow and seen the family change over the years, we have shared many tender moments together.

“When Crown Prince Frederik turned 50, I took a strong portrait cover of him that graced magazine covers that is one of my favourite pictures of him. It shows his maturity. I have photographed Crown Princess Mary and her babies and been privileged to share in their special moments.”

SKIN CARE

Danish skincare guru Ole Henriksen met Princess Mary during her first pregnancy with eldest son Crown Prince Christian when she called on him for advice.

This sparked a long friendship and he has since advised the royal on the correct products to use and how to enhance her natural radiance.

Mr Henriksen described their initial encounter as one where he was “mesmerised by her beautiful smile and stunning sense of style”.

While he is now based in Los Angeles, his luxurious products are regularly delivered to Amalienborg Palace.



Ole Henriksen
and Steen Evald.

LADIES IN WAITING

Over the years, Princess Mary has had several ladies-in-waiting, who organise her work diary, accompany the royal to high-profile events and assist her during engagements.

For seven years, this prestigious role was held by Tanja Doky, who is said to have struck up a firm and lasting friendship with the royal.

After Ms Doky left the role, former barrister Christine Pili Hansen stepped into her shoes. She held the role for several years before being appointed private secretary

and lady-in-waiting in 2015.

In that position, she helped organise the royal's ever-expanding work diary, accompanied her to high-profile events and assisted her during engagements.

In 2021, Ms Pili Hansen left the royal household and returned to her job as deputy head of the Department of International Law in Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

She was replaced by Henriette Ellermann-Kingombe, who previously worked in the Danish Prime Minister's Office and the Danish parliament. She remains in the role.



Henriette
Ellermann-
Kingombe

Mary's diet is thought to be based on locally sourced and readily available natural foods.



Picture: Steen Brogaard, Kongehuset

Great Danes playing game of thrones

The line of succession in the House of Denmark has shifted since King Frederik X and wife Queen Mary took the throne. Their son Crown Prince Christian, 18, is now the next heir to the throne and his sister Isabella, 16, second. Despite the smiles, Frederik's brother Prince Joachim, fifth in line, is still displeased his children were stripped of their prince and princess titles a year ago. Nevertheless, they are still in the line of succession.

Who's who in the Danish royal family:

PRINCESS BENEDIKTE
Margrethe's younger sister is 10th in line to the throne. Her three children have the title prince and princess, but lost

their succession rights as they were not permanently resident in Denmark during their education.

PRINCESS ISABELLA
Mary and Frederik's eldest daughter is 16. She undertook her first royal engagement, aged 8, in 2015.

PRINCE VINCENT
The 13-year-old's place in the line of succession was affected by a constitutional change two years before his birth, that no longer favoured boys. Vincent is third in line behind his big brother and sister, Christian and Isabella.

MARY
Married to Frederik since 2004, the Australian famously met her prince

charming in a Sydney pub. Popular with Danes after embracing their language and culture, she acted as regent in Margrethe and Frederik's absence in 2019, but now faces the full responsibilities of Queen.

PRINCESS JOSEPHINE
Frederik and Mary's younger daughter, Josephine, 13, is Vincent's twin. Both have a Greenlandic name among their middle names, Ivalo for her, and Minik for him.

FREDERIK
Ascending to the throne at the age of 55, King Frederik X will reign over Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. He's been known as a party prince, but his mother has lauded his down-to-earth

ability to connect to "all sorts of people".

PRINCE CHRISTIAN
The 18-year-old seemed keen to stay out of the royal limelight in 2023 when it was announced he would delay taking a royal allowance and focus on his studies, but as heir to the throne there's no doubting his star power.

MARGRETHE II
Known for her chain-smoking (only curtailed recently) and eccentric style, the first female monarch since Margrethe I (1376-1412) also has a tough streak — stripping four of her

grandchildren of their royal titles to "futureproof" the monarchy.

PRINCE JOACHIM
Frederik's brother, Joachim, 54, has moved to Washington with his second wife and younger children. He was upset at his mother's decision to remove his children's titles.

PRINCESS MARIE
Marie married Frederik's brother Joachim in 2008 and they have two children.

COUNT HENRIK
Henrik, 14, is the only son of Joachim and his second wife, Marie. He, his sister, Athena, and their half-siblings lost their royal titles on January 1, 2023, but remain in the line of succession.

COUNTESS ATHENA
Athena, 11, is the only daughter of Joachim and his second wife Marie. She is the last of Margrethe's grandchildren in the line of succession.

COUNT FELIX
Felix, 21, is the youngest son of Joachim and his first wife, Alexandra. In 2022, he began studying at Copenhagen Business School.

COUNT NIKOLAI
The eldest son of Joachim and his first wife, Alexandra, has found success as a model, but is also a business student. The 24-year-old has described losing his title as a shock, but "I am the same person as I've always been".

HAIRDRESSER

Soon after Mary Donaldson met and fell in love with the then Crown Prince Frederik, she was introduced to the hairdresser and make-up artist Soeren Hedegaard. It was a working relationship built on fun, trust and loyalty.

In the early days, the pair allegedly would sneak out to test makeup looks at the Estee Lauder counter in a Copenhagen department store. The master stylist primed and prepped the stunning Mary for 23 years.

But, following the abdication announcement, Mr Hedegaard decided to step

down and focus on his job as creative director at the STUHR salon.

In a heartfelt Instagram post, he wrote: "Dear friends, with the end of 2023 and with a change of throne in view, I have also chosen a change in my life. Mr Hedegaard said he was 'passing the baton on to the next generation'. 'It has been 23 amazing and unforgettable years with memories and friendships that I will always carry in my heart,' he wrote. His replacement has not been announced.



Soeren Hedegaard

PERSONAL TRAINERS/ NUTRITIONIST

Queen Mary has employed a string of personal trainers over the years to help her maintain her fitness and shape.

She is said to prefer a targeted exercise regimen that includes walking, jogging and horse riding. The Queen is also a fan of weights and heavy lifting.

When it comes to her diet, she is said to be proponent of the "Danish diet", a sensible eating plan that is centred on locally sourced and readily available natural foods.

It focuses less on meat and more on oily fish as well as root vegetables, nuts and fruits.



CLOSEST CONFIDANTS

Caroline Heering served as Queen Mary's lady in waiting and private secretary for a period shortly after the royal married King Frederik X.

Over the decades, the pair's working relationship grew and Heering is now believed to be one of Queen Mary's closest friends and confidantes.

Ms Heering is married to one of King Frederik's childhood friends, Peter, and the pair are godparents to Princess Isabella and Prince Vincent.

Birgitte Handwerk, the partner of one of King Frederik's best friends, Jeppe, was one of Queen Mary's first friends in Denmark.

They shared a common bond as they both raised young families at the same time.

Ms Handwerk is godmother to Queen Mary's daughter, Josephine, while her partner is a godfather to Crown Prince Christian.



Caroline Elisabeth Heering

Prince Frederik and Princess Mary at The Royal Palace in Stockholm in June, 2015. Picture: Getty Images



Informal approach a winner

MARY AND FREDERIK'S ABILITY TO ACT LIKE 'ORDINARY PEOPLE' WILL APPEAL TO DANES, WHO WANT LESS POMP AND FORMALITY THESE DAYS

Queen Margrethe tipped her hand on the most important role she planned for Crown Princess Mary to play in the daily life of the Royal House of Denmark.

When it was announced the Australian princess would receive the official title of Her Majesty Queen, it stood in stark contrast to the Danish monarchy's previous foreign-born "consort", Prince Henrik. Queen Margrethe II refused to make her French husband king – an open wound he took to his grave in 2018. For Queen Mary, however, she had bigger ambitions.

"It means she will also play the role of substitute for the King," historian Lars Hovbakke Sorensen said. "She can reign over the country for some days, or weeks, when both the King and the Crown Prince are travelling abroad."

But the professor at Copenhagen's Absalon University and author of several distinguished European history books, including *Denmark From Ancient Times to Today*, said it was how Mary could spend her days – between the state visits and official duties – that would set the new Queen apart and define the future of the crown. From the

moment she wakes up until when she goes to bed, it's not so much the number of engagements on her calendar – though there will be many, if not more than Queen Margrethe – but how those appointments are conducted.

"They are famous for being more informal in the way of talking to people and to speaking to ordinary people than Queen Margrethe," Sorensen said, adding their regular days would not be filled with the trappings of pomp and formality.

Mary can reign over the country for some days, or weeks

Lars Hovbakke Sorensen
Historian

"They are very close to being like ordinary people. And that is really a strength because it appeals to how people see the monarchy today in a more informal way."

That's not to say her days will be spent making Vegemite sandwiches and packing lunch boxes. Sorensen said the new

King and Queen were expected to engage in notably more royal responsibilities and official duties than Queen Margrethe, who received between 50 to 150 audiences a day and, since 1972, had more than 50,000 conversations with Danes at Christiansborg Palace every other Monday.

"Frederik the 10th will have his wife by his side, and that is different from Queen Margrethe, who lost her husband in 2018," he said.

"They will have a lot of work to do and they will be having more activities as two instead of one. They will go on a lot of official visits abroad and receive a lot of respected guests from other countries."

"So she'll play this traditional role of what a queen consort is expected to do," Sorensen said, adding Queen Margrethe would step back as a more of a "patroness" post-abdication.

"In her daily life, Queen Mary will be engaged in a lot of different things: opening exhibitions, working to improve the conditions for the poor, children and single women, and a lot of different affairs. She is very much engaged in social issues and she has a lot of protections, as it's called, of different organisations."

The new Queen is expected to continue her work with The Mary Foundation, which she established in 2007 to combat the social isolation that comes with bullying, domestic violence and loneliness.

She is also expected to

Fairytale romance from a pub to a palace

It was the unlikely of romances: a globetrotting playboy prince and a girl from Tasmania working in the back office of an Australian real estate agency.

But from a chance meeting in a crowded Sydney harbourside pub in 2000 to today, the fairytale love story of now King Frederik and Queen Mary has played out for all the world to see.

"I found myself in an unknown country among

happy, festive foreigners," Frederik would later recount to the royal court of that chance meeting at the Slip Inn during the 2000 Olympics.

He never told her he was the heir to the throne of Denmark as he introduced himself to her simply as Fred as he stood there drinking merrily with others, including his brother Prince Joachim and cousin Prince Nikolaos.

"My only luggage at that time was my high



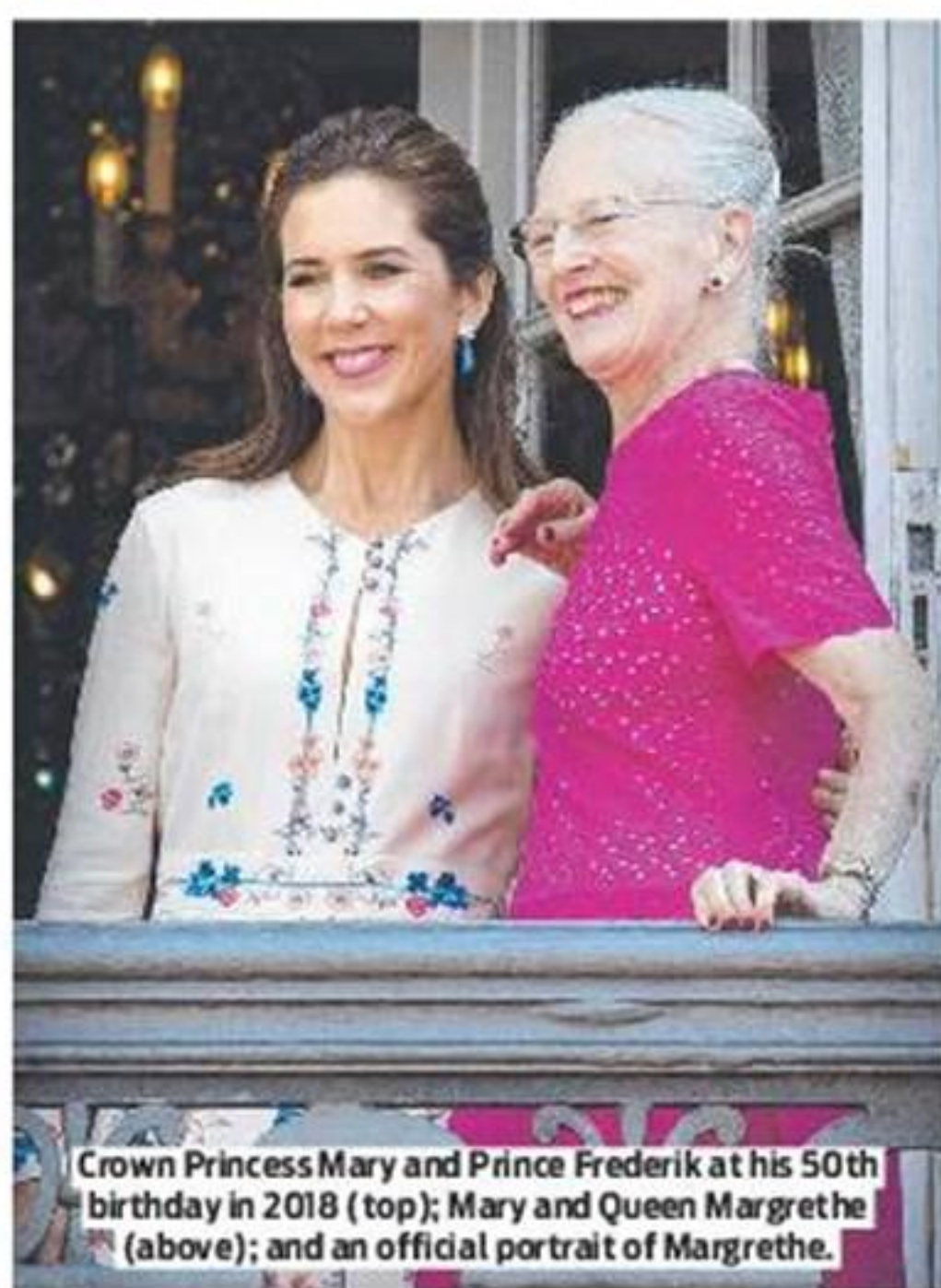
expectations of my visit and a certain degree of confidence," the then Crown Prince Frederik would reveal during toasts after their wedding in May 2004.

"I had only been in Australia two days before our fates were sealed, even though neither of us was aware of it. But your radiance shone clearly for me from our very first meeting."

The vivacious Mary Donaldson had only been

invited to the pub by her then Bondi Junction terrace housemate, who told her to come for beer and pizza with friends at a city pub.

By all reports Mary and her Aussie gal pals began debating the sexiness of chest hair on men as they turned to the table of princes and their open shirts to pose the question and sample a chest rub. The hairless Frederik caught her eye and they soon bonded over more in-depth



Crown Princess Mary and Prince Frederik at his 50th birthday in 2018 (top); Mary and Queen Margrethe (above); and an official portrait of Margrethe.

continue as a patron of Danish organisations such as Children, Youth & Grief, the Christmas Seal Foundation, and the Danish Mental Health Fund. As patron of the Danish Swimming Federation and the Danish Heart Foundation, Queen Mary could also continue focusing on creating communities through sports. As patron of the UN Population Fund and Maternity Foundation, her work focuses on promoting the rights of girls and women.

She is expected to also highlight health issues in Europe with the World Health Organisation, and remain a member of the UN's International Centre for Research on Women's Leadership Council.

Queen Mary likely will deliver more official speeches than she did as a princess, when she addressed the People's Movement Against Loneliness conference in 2022, Prince Frederik's official 50th birthday in 2018, and the opening of the UN's Global

Goals for Sustainable Development conference in 2016. Mary was first made a "rigsforstander" in 2019 as Crown Princess. On the occasion she rises to the acting head of state of Denmark as Queen, it will be one of the rare times in the country's history that anyone other than the Crown Prince will be allowed to act as regent in the absence of the monarch.

It places a heavier weight of responsibility on Queen Mary's shoulders than her predecessor, Prince Henrik, who renounced his role as consort and spent most of his final years at his private vineyard in southern France.

Rather than being put out to pasture like Prince Henrik, Sorensen said Queen Margrethe saw Mary in the mould of her beloved mother Queen Ingrid, who was widowed after King Frederik IX died in 1972.

"After he died, Queen Ingrid of Sweden very often was a substitute for Queen Margrethe when she was

abroad," Sorensen said. "So we have seen it before that you have foreigners, so to speak, in taking that role."

The importance of Queen Ingrid continues to resonate in the Danish royal family today. She became the first member of the family other than the Crown Prince who was allowed to act as regent in the absence of the monarch.

That move is what allows Queen Mary to become Denmark's acting head of state and fulfil official functions in place of Frederik X, as Queen Ingrid did "innumerable" times after the death of Frederik IX.

"Queen Ingrid's importance for the present Danish royal family can hardly be over-estimated," Amalienborg Palace's official history of the late royal said.

"She helped her husband rise to the occasion as king, and with her perceptiveness and sense of style, set an example for the current generations of the royal family."

HOBART GIRL WHO WANTED TO BE A VET

GROWING UP IN A MODEST HOME AND POPULAR AT SCHOOL, THE YOUNG DAUGHTER OF SCOTTISH IMMIGRANTS LOVED SPORT AND HORSES

When Mary Donaldson was growing up she did not dream of becoming a princess.

She had a much more sensible plan; to become a vet.

However, she was just two years old when she first caught the eye of a prince, wandering into the path of the then Prince Charles while he was on a visit to Tasmania.

Emma Tom, who wrote the 2005 unauthorised biography *Something About Mary*, said the now queen "made a good impression on royal males from the get-go".

Born to two Scottish-born immigrants – John Donaldson, a professor and academic, and Etta Donaldson, a cat lover, royalist and a personal assistant at the University of Tasmania – Mary was the youngest of four.

In a 2004 documentary, her father admits he was "more of a disciplinarian than necessary", although by all accounts Mary got away with more than her siblings.

The Donaldson children grew up in a modest four-bed home in Morris Ave, Hobart, and shared bedrooms.

The older-style property was recently listed for rent in 2022 for \$570.

Mary said her father encouraged her to do what made her happy. For her, that involved lots of sport including hockey, tennis and basketball. She was very competitive, but horses were her real passion. Eventually, she persuaded her parents to buy her one, which she called Sultan, and later competed in dressage and showjumping competitions.

Like all the Donaldsons, Mary was publicly educated, first at Sandy Bay Infants

School and then Waimea Heights Primary and Taroona High.

Her teachers described her as capable and she was popular with her classmates.

Teacher Peter Armstrong remembers her as "confident, articulate and outgoing".

"She had firm goals and she was always going to achieve," Mr Armstrong told News Corp. "You could never predict that she would go on to marry a prince but she was very determined."

Tasmanian journalist Rachel Edwards said Taroona High was known for its "skatey culture" and a school where kids liked to party.

However, despite many journalists looking into her background, no one has ever unearthed anything remotely scandalous, apart from 1980s fashion that included "giant shoulder pads and a scrunched poodle perm", according to author Tom.

Glenn Marriott, a former boyfriend who said he dated Mary for three years, described her as a "fantastic, sweet girl".

After abandoning her earlier ambition of becoming a vet, she studied commerce and law at the University of Tasmania.

She had a new dream to become a managing director of an international company.

Well, she can probably tick that one off. As Queen of Denmark she is now the face of a Danish brand, representing her adopted country overseas.

Hooray to that Tassie girl who got what she wanted in the end.



Princess Mary during a visit to Sydney in 2011, and (insets, above) as a child, at her school formal and the former Donaldson family home.



discussion of horses and sport, before the high-spirited group drank on into the night at other city bars. For "Fred" and Mary, their fates were sealed, their love story begun.

Hobart-born Mary had graduated from the University of Tasmania with degrees in commerce and law but worked in various jobs including as an account manager for an advertising agency, even appearing in a TV commercial in 1998 for

Victoria's regional train travel (which since last weekend has resurfaced to trend on social media).

But after the Slip Inn romance she soon quit Sydney and moved to Copenhagen for intense lessons in the Danish language, diplomacy and royal decorum.

The couple maintained a long-distance relationship for a year, with the then 32-year-old Frederik making secret trips to Australia to visit his 28-

year-old love, but by 2001 it was decided her journey into the royal family should begin.

By 2003 Queen Margrethe formally acknowledged the relationship and an engagement was announced later that year.

Their love would make four beautiful children, with the eldest, 18-year-old Christian, elevated to Crown Prince and heir to the throne after the ascension of his parents.

Frederik might today be

king, but from the beginning he has credited his queen with being his guiding force.

"The joy and the strength you give me is like the sun in the daytime which, with its radiance, melts all doubts and darkness on earth," he said during their wedding vows.

"And like the moon at night, you shine with a watchful and delicate beam of gentleness, which extinguishes the mischief and deceit used by the symbols of darkness."



PROCLAMATION OF FREDERIK & MARY

JANUARY 14, 2024

MONDAY

EEHE-DEOT NSSI



>



“
I am so happy you swept me
off my feet and that we dared
to fall for each other not just
for a moment but for life

FORMER CROWN PRINCESS MARY OF DENMARK

Herald Sun

We're for you

'I'LL FIGHT LIKE A DEMON'

As a boy, Alex de Minaur feasted on videos of tennis greats on Christmas Day. Ahead of his first round match on centre court tonight, Australia's big hope says he is now ready to emulate them.



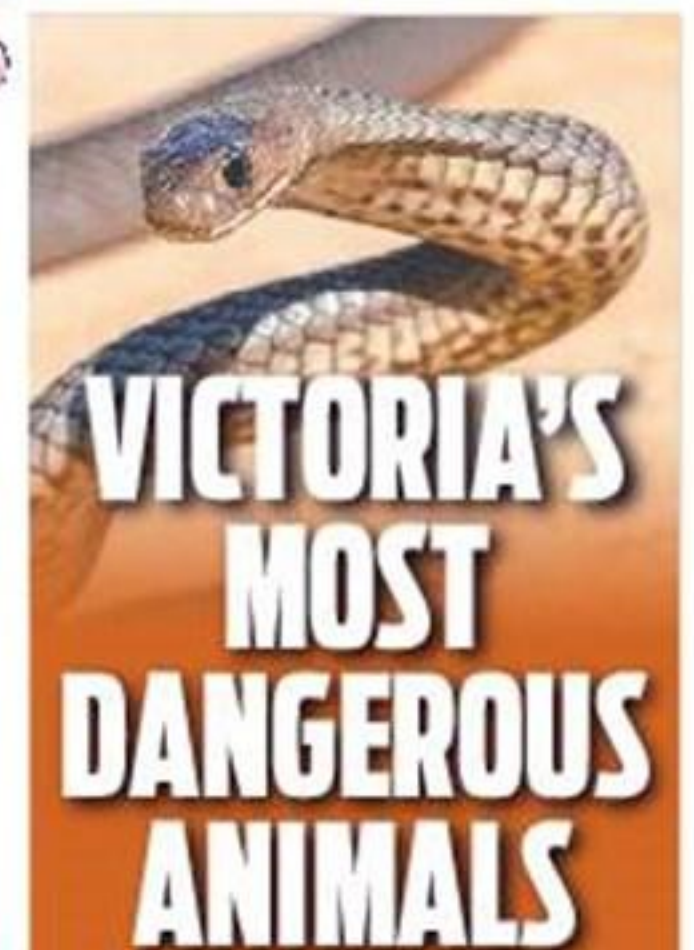
**DJOKER SURVIVES
EARLY SCARE** Sport

REPORTS, PICTURES, ALL THE COURTSIDE GOSSIP + COMPLETE GUIDE TO TODAY'S ACTION: **PAGES 10-11, SPORT**



**GUESS
WHAT
CATE
LOOKS LIKE
NOW**

PICTURES, PAGE 7



**VICTORIA'S
MOST
DANGEROUS
ANIMALS**

EXCLUSIVE REPORT, P13

SUBURBAN TRAGEDY Tears for 'humble' doctor stabbed, rammed with car as he chased thugs who raided his home

HERO CUT DOWN

Olivia Jenkins

A doctor killed while chasing thugs who raided his home was a "humble and much-loved" man, distraught friends have said.

Police were on Sunday night hunting the home invaders who stabbed Ashley Gordon,

33, and rammed him with a car, after he chased them in his own vehicle when they fled his Doncaster home.

He was fatally attacked by them in Eildon St, less than 1km from his home, early on Sunday. His body was found in the street.

FULL REPORT, P8



Units in high demand

EXCLUSIVE Sarah Petty

Many Victorians are buying units instead of houses as high prices and borrowing limits squeeze budgets.

Real Estate Institute of Victoria data reveals that in 117 suburbs last year, the median unit price outperformed the median house price.

In Mt Martha on the Mornington Peninsula, a typical unit rose in value from \$740,000 in 2022 to \$872,500 in 2023, as house prices there fell 16 per cent. Last year, Melbourne's median house price fell \$110,000 (10.6 per cent) to \$930,000, but units dipped just \$15,000 (3.8 per cent) to \$630,000.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 7



EXCLUSIVE REPORT, PAGE 9

PM fights for tax cuts

Angira Bharadwaj

Anthony Albanese is fending off attacks from the left of his party to water down the stage three tax cuts he promised at the last election, with party sources saying the cost-of-living crisis is a key reason why the policy will most likely survive.

Labor sources described the pressure the Prime Minister has faced to meddle with a key election promise after he was caught in a breakfast TV interview refusing to guarantee the cuts, which would give financial relief to anyone earning more than \$40,000 a year.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 12



Cate Blanchett sports an unfamiliar look in a mousy brown wig and large black-framed glasses as she filmed her new project in Dublin on Friday. Picture: Padraig O'Reilly

Mother of a role for Cate

Cate Blanchett has once again shown just how much she can transform herself for a role.

The Aussie A-lister was snapped arriving on set for her latest movie in Dublin – and she looked unrecognisable.

The 54-year-old, who is believed to be playing the role of a mother in the film – called *Father, Mother, Sister, Brother* – was seen wearing a short brown bowl-cut wig, a red turtleneck and a pair of glasses while holding a teddy bear and a drink bottle.

US indie filmmaker Jim Jarmusch is directing the film, which has already shot scenes in New Jersey and will also film in Paris.

Blanchett last worked with Jarmusch about 20 years ago for *Coffee & Cigarettes*, which also starred Steve Buscemi and Iggy Pop.

The actor is renowned for being able to change herself into a character, including an elf in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Queen Elizabeth I and even Bob Dylan.



Elevated demand for units

Apartment market grows

EXCLUSIVE
Sarah Petty

Many Victorians are buying units instead of houses as high prices and a lack of borrowing power squeezes budgets.

Data from the Real Estate Institute of Victoria revealed that in 117 of 141 suburbs it compared last year, the median unit price outperformed the median house price.

The biggest disparity between house and unit prices was in Mt Martha, on the Mornington Peninsula, where the price of a typical unit grew \$132,500 from \$740,000 in 2022 to \$872,500 in 2023, while house prices fell 16 per cent.

REIV figures show Melbourne's overall median house price fell \$110,000 (10.6 per cent) in 2023 to \$930,000 as the city lost its million-dollar market status. The cost of a typical unit dropped a more modest \$15,000 (3.8 per cent) to \$630,000.

Recent PropTrack figures that track the value of all homes in a suburb – not just those sold, like the REIV data – found values for houses and units were flat city wide in 2023, with a rise recorded in just over 50 per cent of suburbs.

REIV president Jacob Caine said interest rate rises in the middle of last year affected buyer sentiment and confidence, and cost some the budget to afford a house.

"For first-time buyers, that might have just tipped the scale enough off the back of the previous run of rate rises to push them out of being able to afford a small house," Mr Caine said. "So they might have just

taken the option of moving into the unit market."

In an environment where rent increases and rental availability were an increasing concern, Mr Caine said he heard anecdotally many tenants had decided to buy units instead of continuing to save for houses.

"And in some areas, actually purchasing an apartment is more affordable than paying their rent on the same dwelling," he said.

"There's a few contributing factors, but it's obviously affordability across the board."

Echoing Mr Caine, buyer's advocate Cate Bakos said she had also noticed many renters deciding to buy.

"Now that rents have been climbing, they're finding that it's not heaps more expensive to just go and buy a property for themselves," Ms Bakos said.

"They just want the security of having tenure, and I think that's what's driving things."

She added that some first-home buyers used the "Bank of Mum and Dad" or parental support in the form of family pledge loans or equity loans.

On the other hand, Australian Property Home Loans director Adele Andrews said the data reflected the housing shortage as well as the strong demand for "quality" homes.

"(When) there aren't so many houses to choose from then apartments are really the only option," she said.

"People don't have a lot of quality houses to choose from, so perhaps a nice, newish apartment or a slightly higher-quality apartment is more appealing."

EDITORIAL, PAGE 22



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Doctor's death chasing home invaders shatters friends

'I CAN'T MAKE SENSE OF THIS'

Olivia Jenkins

A 33-year-old man killed while chasing thugs who raided his home was a "humble and much-loved" doctor respected for putting his patients first.

Investigators on Sunday night were hunting the violent home invaders who stabbed Ashley Gordon and rammed him with a car after he chased them from his Doncaster house.

The horrific details of the burglary turned murder are still being pieced together.

Dr Gordon's partner called police as the offenders stole laptops and shoes from the property in Sargent St.

Several neighbours also called the police after hearing a loud "bang" about 5.30am.

Dr Gordon is understood to have then given chase to the armed thieves in his car before they fatally attacked him less than 1km away in Eildon St, where his body was found a short time later.

Loved ones of the young doctor told the Herald Sun he was a "dearly loved" friend and dedicated practitioner.

"Ash was one of the nicest, most humble guys you could meet. No matter your differences in life he was always up for a chat and meeting new people," close friend Jovanne Pieterse said.

"He had this energy that would light up any room, and was dearly loved by so many."

Mr Pieterse said Dr Gordon stood by him and his partner throughout their pregnancy.

"He was such a great doctor, he helped my partner and I through our pregnancy and answered so many questions we had," he said.

Another friend of Dr Gordon's said he was "just such a top guy" who was always friendly and kind.

Trained as a GP, Dr Gordon owned Richmond-based clinic Redefine Aesthetics, which specialises in skin and anti-ageing.



He had previously worked at the Box Hill Super Clinic after completing a medical degree at Monash University.

Dr Gordon's company website described him as an experienced professional who "believes in forming strong relationships with his patients that value honesty and transparency in all aspects of the treatment".

Flowers and a note had been left at the Eildon St scene on Sunday, with a friend saying he would never be able to "make sense of this".

"A true gentleman, intelligent, honest, compassionate, friendly, generous ... I don't think there is one positive characteristic I could leave out," he wrote in a tribute.

"Gone way too soon, brother. I truly thank you for all that you helped me with. Tragic."

A neighbour who asked not to be named said the ordeal was "confronting" for everyone who lived in the street because Dr Gordon was killed for his belongings.

"No amount of material is worth a life, so I think that's the sad part of it," he said.

"It's pretty terrifying, to be honest. You don't really think that's happening five metres away from your door, so it's a little bit confronting."

Dr Gordon is believed to have lived in his two-storey unit for four years with housemates.

His violent death comes as Sargent St residents said their

street had been targeted by opportunistic thieves in recent weeks.

In November, an elderly couple had their home ransacked and valuables stolen while they were out for several hours.

Thieves stole another woman's car while it was parked in her garage on Wednesday.

"I'm still quite shocked," the woman said. "He seemed very nice."

Residents reported hearing several youths gathering for parties in the street in the days before the fatal home invasion.

"They would come here and make a lot of noise," the woman said.

Police say the incidents are not linked.

Police have ramped up patrols in the area and investigations into Dr Gordon's death are ongoing.

olivia.jenkins@news.com.au



Ash Gordon died in a violent home invasion in Doncaster on Saturday; and (insets) a tribute and investigators at the scene in Eildon St.

Surf competitors rip into action

Amanda Lulham

Australia's top surf lifesavers were involved in a mass rescue of swimmers swept out to sea in Sydney just minutes after they had finished racing in the Nutri-Grain surf Ironman and Ironwoman series on Sunday.

Women's winner Lana Rogers heard the rescue call on the radio about 3pm at Maroubra and immediately

headed out to the swimmers in distress.

Newport's Jackson Borg was with fellow surf lifesaver and kayaker Jimmy Walker, who saw the start of the rescue from the sand. The pair also rushed to help the distressed swimmers.

Surf Life Saving Australia national sports manager Wayne Drury said 25 people were involved in the drama, triggered by a "freak rip" that

dragged them down the beach and out to sea.

"There were about 20 or 30 people ... but they are all fine, thankfully," Rogers said.

"The water here moves quickly and they got swept out to sea."

"I just heard 'rescue, rescue, rescue' on the radio and immediately we all just responded. It's what we do. It happened very quickly and everyone just reacted."

Wong in Middle East peace trip

Courtney Gould

Penny Wong will meet with the families of Israeli hostages on her peace trip to the Middle East as tensions show no sign of easing in the region over the Israel-Hamas conflict.

The Foreign Minister will go to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory in the West Bank where she will meet families of hostages and survivors of the October 7 attacks.

"This visit is about advocating for a pathway out of this conflict," Senator Wong said.

"I will be advocating for an increase in the delivery of vital humanitarian assistance, the upholding of international law and greater protection of civilians, and avoiding regional escalation."

Senator Wong's trip follows that of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken last week.

He warned the Israeli gov-

ernment the civilian death toll in Gaza was "far too high".

Sunday marked 100 days since terror group Hamas killed 1200 Israelis and took another 240 hostage. Israel's retaliation has killed more than 20,000 Palestinians.

The Foreign Minister will have to walk a tightrope as she reiterates Australia's condemnation of Hamas and support for Israel's right to defend itself.

WORLD, PAGE 20

Date change? Call it a day

Big majority happy with January 26 celebration and proud of nation

EXCLUSIVE
James Morrow

Fewer than one in five Australians want to change the date of Australia Day while nine in 10 say they are "proud to be Australian", according to polling by the Institute of Public Affairs examining public attitudes to our national day.

However, while almost two thirds agree Australia Day should remain January 26, Australians aged 18-24 are more ambivalent.

This is due to the "relentless indoctrination" of the edu-

cation system, the IPA claims.

According to the survey of more than 1000 people, 63 per cent of respondents agree with the statement "Australia Day should be celebrated on January 26".

Just 17 per cent disagreed, while 20 per cent had no opinion.

The results closely track previous annual IPA surveys that found similar majorities agreeing that Australia Day should remain the 26th.

Support for the date comes despite continuing controversy around Australia

Day, which marks the 1788 landing of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove. Last week supermarket giant Woolworths touched off calls for boycotts after it said it would not sell Australia Day merchandise this year due to a lack of demand.

Earlier this month it was revealed that at least 81 local councils across the country had decided not to hold citizenship ceremonies on Australia Day having been given the green light to choose not to do so by the federal government.

The survey, conducted by



polling firm Dynata, found that celebrating Australia Day on January 26 was controversial only among 18 to 24-year-olds, among whom just 42 per cent agreed the date should be kept.

However, a majority in every bracket of voters older than 25 agreed that the date should

stay the same, with 61 per cent of 25 to 34-year-olds and 71 per cent of those over 55 agreeing with the present Australia Day arrangements.

Even greater numbers agreed that they were proud to be Australian (87 per cent) and that Australian history was something to be proud of (69 per cent).

"Australia is the greatest nation on earth; our way of life and freedoms are the envy of the world, and they must be cherished and celebrated," IPA deputy executive director Daniel Wild said.

"It is concerning just 42 per cent of those aged 18 to 24 support Australia Day on January 26. This is a direct result of relentless indoctrination taking place at schools and universities, (however) a strong majority of younger Australians beyond the years of formal education support our national day."

"You can hardly blame young Australians for having a negative view of their country given they are continually told it is not worth celebrating or fighting for."

ANDREW BOLT, PAGE 21



Kate Kirkpatrick with the tiny chapel 'Miss Mabel' at Wirreanda farm in the Grampians. Picture: Jason Edwards

Vroom with a pew

Sarah Booth

Kate Kirkpatrick's wedding business is on a roll... and so is her chapel.

The Grampians event planner said her chapel on wheels was the "only one in Victoria", offering something

unique to couples who tie the knot on her farm, Wirreanda.

"We've named it Miss Mabel, it gets a great following whenever we post on social media," she said.

"We're ramping up for a busy few months as it's getting more traction."

The tiny, off-grid chapel can be moved around the farm to find the perfect spot for the season and fits about 12 people. Wirreanda specialises in small weddings and elopements.

"It's lovely to be involved, most of the elopements

they're so intimate and special," Ms Kirkpatrick said. "It's an honour to be involved in something so raw."

"Weddings have shrunk in size since the pandemic restrictions."

Long after they have exchanged vows, couples'

presence on the farm can still be felt with their name and wedding date etched on a native tree planted on the day of their wedding.



Sarah Snook

VL - PH/SEOLZOLMA

Aussies hope their golden streak goes on

Aussie television stars Sarah Snook and Elizabeth Debicki hope to add Emmy Awards to their recent Golden Globe wins for *Succession* and *The Crown* respectively, but face stiff competition.

The 75th annual Emmy Awards, to be hosted by Anthony Anderson on Tuesday, come after a delay due to last year's highly publicised strike.

Snook is nominated for outstanding lead actress in a

drama series for her celebrated performance in the critically acclaimed *Succession*.

She is up against New Zealand actor Melanie Lynskey (*Yellowjackets*), Bella Ramsey (*The Last of Us*), Elisabeth Moss (*The Handmaid's Tale*), Sharon Horgan (*Bad Sisters*) and Keri Russell (*The Diplomat*).

At the Golden Globes, Snook won the award for best performance by a female actor in a television drama series.

In her acceptance speech, Snook said *Succession* had changed her life.

"Everybody in it is amazing. The cast, the crew were fantastic, this was a team effort. It was always a team and that was what made the show amazing to be a part of," she said.

Debicki won a Golden Globe for a supporting role on television in *The Crown* where she played the late Princess Diana.

Her Emmy nomination is

also for supporting actress in a drama series. She faces competition from *The White Lotus* actors Jennifer Coolidge, Meghann Fahy, Sabrina Impacciatore, Aubrey Plaza and Simona Tabasco, as well as Rhea Seehorn (*Better Call Saul*) and J. Smith-Cameron (*Succession*).

Fellow Aussie actor Murray Bartlett is nominated as best supporting actor in a limited or anthology series or movie for *Welcome to Chippendales*.



Elizabeth Debicki

Confidential

With Jackie Epstein & Nui Te Koha



at the Open

Chilled Nadia breaks to love

BARTEL NOW COURTING NEW PARTNER IN PUBLIC

Nadia Bartel made her first public appearance with partner of two years Peter Dugmore at the opening day of the Australian Open.

Beaming with happiness, the mum of two and Henne co-founder said the pair were ready to step out more.

"I like to be private in some things but we're so happy," Bartel said.

"He's a really good person and it's been just over two years, we're enjoying our time together. We just had a really nice break in Sydney and I've mainly just been here with family chilling by the pool."

Bartel and Dugmore were guests in the Australian Open's "Set in Style" launch event in the VIVO area for Sunday night's matches.

There she was joined by a swag of A-list guests including tennis legend Andre Agassi, former Aussie Formula One driver Mark Webber, composer Tim Minchin, TV personalities Eddie McGuire, Matt Preston and Melissa Leong, athlete Peter Bol, former top jockey Michelle Payne and

Collingwood stars Darcy Moore, Mason Cox and Brayden Maynard.

At the Piper-Heidsieck black-tie party guests included Amber Petty, the best friend of soon-to-be crowned Queen Mary of Denmark who spoke of her pride in seeing her one-time advertising colleague making history.

Petty, who met Tasmanian Mary Donaldson at a Melbourne advertising agency in the mid 1990s, was a bridesmaid at her 2004 wedding to Prince Frederik of Denmark.

"It's a very emotional day and I'm still just processing it all," Petty said.

"I'm incredibly proud of her and I'm always proud of her. I would be proud of her if she was an advertising exec, a gardener, a vet. I'm proud of her for the person that she is, not the role she's stepping into as such."

Petty stepped out with her friend, former Real Housewives of Melbourne star Cherry DiPietrantonio, alongside faces including socialites Rebecca and Chris Judd and musician Redfoo.

Composer Minchin, who wrote the music and lyrics for the coming musical Groundhog Day, was making his debut courtside and simply wanted a picture with Collingwood ruckman Cox.

"I've never been to a live tennis match," he said. "I'm a Dockers fan but I'm a huge Mason Cox fan. Sport is a type of art and art is a type of sport. I used to play hockey five times a week and then went on a different path."

Elsewhere Elvis actor Olivia DeJonge was joined in the Ralph Lauren suite by model Montana Cox.

Agassi was a special guest in the Uber One x Kia event, along with actor Pallavi Sharda, TV personalities Andy Allen, Waleed Aly and Darren McMullen, and influencers Demi Breton and Ruby Brownless.

Emirates hosted influencer Brooke Warne with partner Alex Heath and Collingwood star Maynard with his partner Ashlee Browning.

PETER DUGMORE AND NADIA BARTEL



CHRIS AND REBECCA JUDD



MONTANA COX



AMBER PETTY



ANDRE AGASSI AND DARCY MOORE



CARLA AND EDDIE MCGUIRE



REDFOO

AGASSI IN FAST LANE WITH AUSTRALIAN OPEN RETURN

With four Australian Open championships under his belt, US tennis legend Andre Agassi could never be accused of being a passenger at Melbourne Park.

But 21 years after his last triumph at Rod Laver Arena, Agassi has returned to the hallowed courts as exactly

that — a passenger — at Melbourne's Grand Slam tournament.

On Monday, Agassi will ride in random "comfort electric" cars with Uber One members being transported to the Australian Open.

"I look forward to meeting everybody," Agassi told the

Herald Sun. "If they're crazy fans... who have followed me and watched every match, then I'll apologise for half of my career. I always look forward to the possibility they might not even know me. We'll see. Life is about connection, it's about people."

Agassi also revisited his

mullet phase, and now wears a "Kentucky Waterfall" hairdo, in a new campaign for the ride share giant.

"It was such a part of my evolution," Agassi said of his famous locks. "Now with the mullet coming back (into style), I'm not sure if I should feel guilty or proud."





BIGGEST OPEN OF ALL

Huge crowds make the first Sunday start to our grand slam a success

Peter Rolfe

The first Sunday start to the Australian Open has been hailed a huge success, as tennis greats predicted two Aussie stars could go all the way at Melbourne Park this year.

A record first day crowd of 87,705 – nearly 10,000 more than last year's first day attendance – on Sunday saw Melbourne's grand slam event begin earlier than usual and spark hopes of all-time attendance records.

Last night's crowd of 29,802 was treated to a pulsating four-set match as reigning champion Novak Djokovic held off 18-year-old Croatian qualifier Dino Prizmic in a four-hour battle.

In a tick of approval for the Open starting on Sunday instead of Monday, crowds flocked to the first instalment of a tournament that will run for 15 days and stretch across three weekends for the first time.

Tennis Australia boss Craig Tiley said the success of a new opening day, introduced to prevent matches stretching into the early hours of the next morning, was the perfect start to what loomed as an unprecedented Open.

"Ticket sales today have been fairly significant, a lot more than we expected," he said on Sunday.

It comes as legends Evonne Goolagong Cawley and Andre Agassi backed two big hopes to fly the flag for Australia at the pointy end of the tournament.

Goolagong Cawley anointed Aussies Ajla Tomljanovic and Alex de Minaur as her favourites to win on home soil.

"I'd like to see a local do well," Goolagong Cawley said.

"Tomljanovic – she's doing well, she's come back after injuries – but I think she's got a good chance.

"And obviously Alex de Minaur, he's been winning a few tournaments, I can see the confidence growing in him.

"So I think he's got a good chance of winning it too."

Agassi said de Minaur was "so impressive".

"He is a lot of fun to watch too with his athleticism and movement," he said.

With 89,894 people attending AO Opening Week, presented by the Herald Sun, Acting Premier Ben Carroll predicted one million fans could flock to Melbourne Park across three weeks for the first time. "This really is going to shine a light on Melbourne like never before ... it's more than a sporting event – it's a festival," he said.

But as the government announced a new tourism campaign to spruik Victoria that it could not confirm the cost of, it was also forced to defend huge spending on the Open.



TODAY ON ROD LAVER ARENA

From Noon

Anna Karolina Schmiedlova
v Coco Gauff (4)
Zizou Bergs v Stefanos
Tsitsipas (7)

From 7pm

Alex de Minaur (10)
v Milos Raonic
Caroline Garcia (16)
v Naomi Osaka



Fans young and old – and all those inbetween (as well as a few carrots) – had a ball on the first day of the Australian Open yesterday. Pictures: Getty Images, Aaron Francis

The government provided \$63m to Tennis Australia in 2022, on top of \$43m it previously loaned to prevent the sporting body becoming insolvent at the height of Covid.

Mr Carroll said taxpayer money covering Open losses then was a significant reason the tournament would stay in Melbourne and out of the hands of other nations keen to steal it from Victoria.

"We know there are threats from Saudi Arabia and things like that but I am very confident ... this Open, it will just continue to go from strength to strength," he said.

Mr Tiley said "an arrangement" had been made with the government. "We added more years onto the agreement that we had to remain in Melbourne. This is Melbourne's event. This is Victoria's event."

Several Aussies fell at the first hurdle on Sunday, with Sydney's Chris O'Connell, 29, the first local to win through to the second round with a fighting, five-sets victory against Chile's Christian Garin.

De Minaur is the headliner among the 11 Aussies in action on Monday, with the top 10 talent taking to centre court against Canadian Milos Raonic in the night session.

Meanwhile, fans have been urged to do in dodgy taxi operators, with a crackdown on taxi and ride share drivers charging illegal high prices at Melbourne Park.

Mr Carroll advised anyone turned away from a cab or asked to pay sky-high fares to report the driver to the Victorian Taxi Directorate.

peter.rolfe@news.com.au
MORE REPORTS, SPORT

Ball kids in middle of the action

Peter Rolfe

Two ball kids have narrowly avoided injury after being caught up in the middle of the action on the first day of the Australian Open.

Russian World No. 64 Pavel Kotov was lucky not to be turfed out of the tournament after smashing a ball in frustration which narrowly missed a ball kid on the court six "party court" on Sunday afternoon.

The 191cm player defeated Frenchman Arthur Rinderknech in a tense, five-set encounter lasting more than four hours and 42 minutes – but only after an on-court tantrum that nearly took out a young ball girl. Kotov did



Close calls with Dane Sweeny and Pavel Kotov. Source: 7news

not apologise, saying just that he was "angry".

"I was angry ... about the previous point, previous serve maybe ... because I had tons of break points," he said.

In another mishap, Aussie qualifier Dane Sweeny accidentally collided with a



ball kid as he tried to make a shot during his brave five-set loss to Argentine 22nd seed Francisco Cerundolo.

The Aussie quickly wrapped his arms around the youngster after realising his mistake and checked on the child's safety after losing the point.

First Jasper, now monsoons cause grief

Jessica Wang

With the monsoon season about to descend on northern Queensland, a major concern will be how the renewed downpours affect regions still recovering from Cyclone Jasper.

In December, the slow-moving category 2 storm caused widespread flooding, damage to homes, power cuts and landslides in the state's far north – areas which could soon

be lashed by severe winds and heavy rains.

Bureau of Meteorology senior meteorologist Angus Hines said the monsoon could result in parts of Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia receiving up to 300mm of rain.

He said while the rainfall was seasonal, it would be worrying for towns north of Cairns, which bore the brunt of Cyclone Jasper.

"They're still in recovery mode in some areas," Mr Hines said.

"So, even though we're seeing some more rainfall, it's not really wanted or welcome rainfall, as it could impact or set back some of those recovery efforts."

Mr Hines said that the monsoons would likely "stick around for a while".

"The rain could be up to 50 or 100mm through the first

half of this week, and it's likely to linger into the second half of the week as well," he said.

"It's not going to be torrential rain every day, but we do see that risk of wet weather and much heavier falls."

Queenslanders have been warned to prepare for potential flash flooding as a monsoon trough sweeps across the far north, bringing a new wave of heavy rain to the already drenched ground.

New wrinkle in ageing

Some day there could be a way to prevent wrinkles – in time.

It's been long believed that wrinkles were simply caused by the ageing process – and exacerbated by ultraviolet light from the sun – but bacteria may actually be to blame, according to some "groundbreaking" new research.

The Center for Microbiome Innovation at the University of

California San Diego teamed up with L'Oréal Research and Innovation for the study, published in the journal *Frontiers*, which found that wrinkles are linked to the skin microbiome, which is the collection of microorganisms that inhabit our skin.

The findings explain why the ageing process is not uniform, as some folks of the same age look older than others.

Heat on Labor over tax cut plan

Left MPs attack policy

EXCLUSIVE
Angira Bharadwaj

Anthony Albanese is fending off attacks from the left of his party to water down the stage three tax cuts he promised at the last election, with party sources saying the cost of living crisis is a key reason why the policy will probably survive.

Labor sources have described the pressure the Prime Minister has faced to meddle with a key election promise, after he was seen refusing to guarantee the cuts in a breakfast TV interview.

The cut would provide financial relief to anyone earning more than \$40,000 a year.

One Labor source said there was growing support for the policy in caucus, with more Labor MPs recognising it could help the "hurting" middle class.

"It's becoming more acceptable (in the caucus). People in the middle are really hurting. This is one way to give back," the source said.

"There will be other measures that will focus on the lower income earners ... (the PM) and the Treasurer have both said that."

It's understood there was intense opposition to the policy after the election, but the party room has seen growing acceptance of the cuts – although privately, several MPs are still not on board.

When Mr Albanese was asked about the internal push-back by *The Daily Telegraph*, a spokesman for the Treasurer responded: "Our position on the stage three tax cuts hasn't changed."

The average Australian full-time worker earns \$1600 a

week – an annual salary of \$83,200, according to the latest data from the Australia Bureau of Statistics.

For a family with two parents working full time, earning between \$80,000 and \$90,000 each, there would be between \$875 and \$1125 per adult in savings if Mr Albanese pushes ahead with the cuts.

Economist Saul Eslake said the policy would benefit those Australians who had been most affected by interest rate hikes and rent increases.

"The people who earn less than \$40,000 a year would be pensioners who technically own their homes outright and hence haven't been affected by increased mortgage rates and may have even benefited from higher interest on their savings," he said.

"But otherwise the typical working family will get some cost of living relief from the stage three tax cuts."

"That wasn't what they were intended to do by the Morrison government but nonetheless that will be their effect."

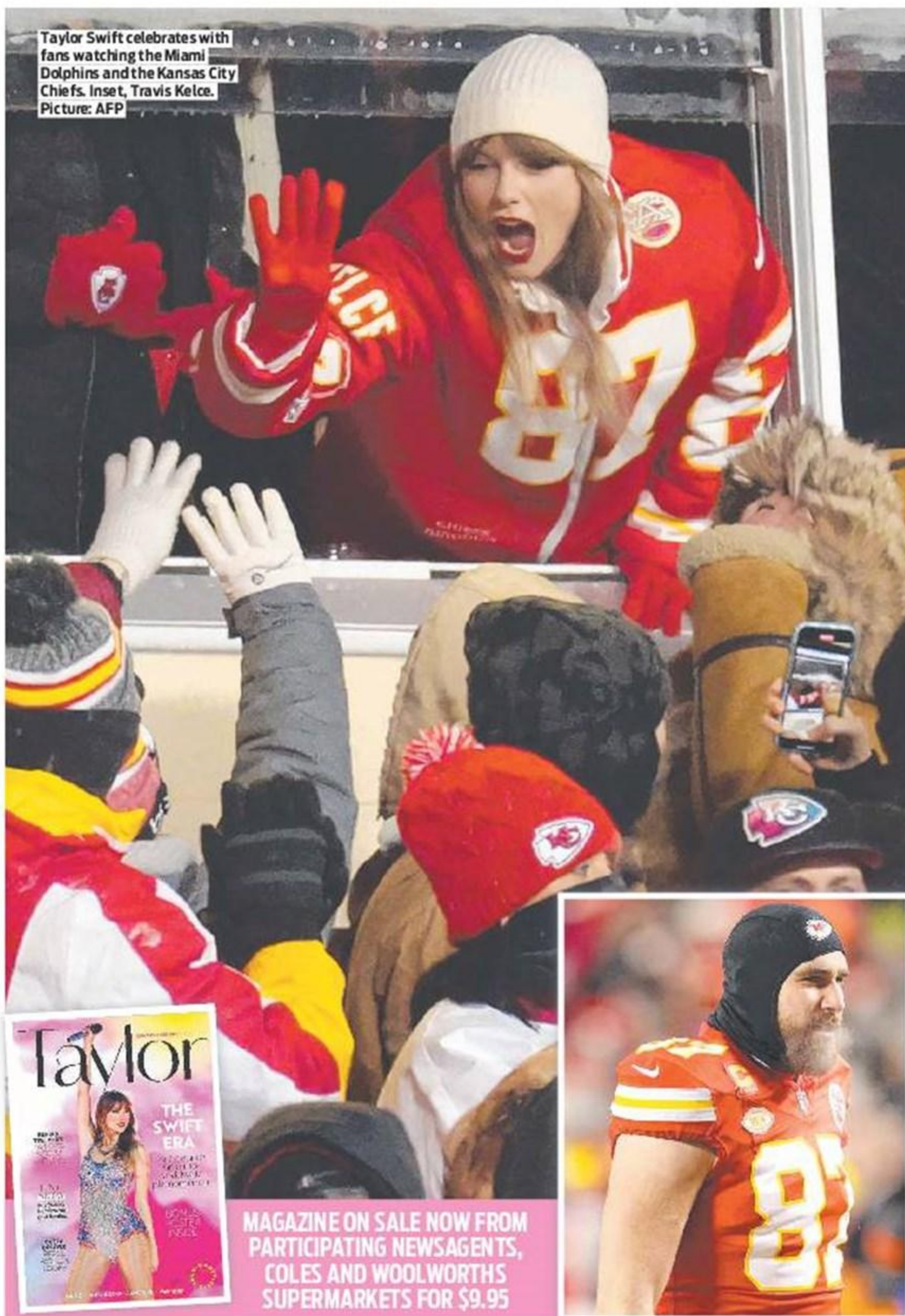
He added that giving the vast majority of the \$14bn scheme to the wealthy would put less pressure on inflation as they were unlikely to spend it.

Mr Eslake said that beyond the tax cuts, any cost of living measures by the Albanese government should be aimed at people who are working but on very low incomes, and who are renting.

Riverstone dad-of-two Ben Campton, 38, and his wife will get \$2500 in tax savings under the planned cuts.

"It would be something," he said.

OPINION, PAGE 23



Chiefs' No.87, Taylor's version

Taylor Swift may have an album titled 1989 but this weekend she donned a puffer jacket emblazoned with the number 87.

The 34-year-old pop star was in Kansas to support her boyfriend Travis Kelce on

Saturday for the Kansas City Chiefs' wildcard game against the Miami Dolphins for the 2024 NFL playoffs.

In an ode to Kelce's jersey number, Swift was dressed in a No.87 jacket designed by Kristin Juszczyk, wife of

49ers fullback Kyle Juszczyk.

She sat next to her boyfriend's mum Donna during the game, which was held in freezing conditions at Arrowhead Stadium.

The public show of support followed speculation the "it"

couple's reunion would be cold and frosty after reports they had their first row over the Christmas break.

Life & Style reported that Kelce "snapped" at Swift on Christmas Day leaving her feeling confused and hurt.

DON'T WORRY, I WON'T BITE...

Surprising animals that sent us to ED

EXCLUSIVE
Sarah Booth

More than 12 Victorians daily are treated in emergency departments for animal bites or injuries.

New figures show that creatures big and small – from ants to kangaroos – regularly taken on humans.

Staff treated 18,250 patients in the state's public hospital emergency departments for animal-related injuries – excluding dogs and horses – in the past four financial years, new Monash University Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit data show.

This included 4800 cases in the 2023 financial year.

Dogs and horses were involved in so many incidents they have their own database, but the latest available data show there were 3730 dog attacks in the 2022 financial year.

This placed them well above cats, which were responsible for almost one in five cases in the "other animal" database and injured 3513 people in the four years to June 2023.

More than 40 per cent of cat victims' injuries were



serious enough to warrant hospital admission for further treatment.

Women were more likely than men to be injured by their feline friends – representing 73 per cent of all patients – and the most common injury was a cat bite (three in four cases) followed by scratches.

Insects were the second-most common creature on the list and sent more young children to emergency than any other animal, with one third of cases involving children under 10 years old.

But despite being linked to more than 2470 injuries, most cases were not serious and 96 per cent of

patients did not need to be admitted to hospital.

The vast majority of insect cases were for bites, but more than 120 people sought emergency care because an insect was stuck in their ear.

More than 1800 animal-related injuries – or one in 10 cases – were caused by bees, including 323 cases of anaphylaxis or an allergic reaction.

Creepy-crawlies were not to be outdone either, and came in fourth place, with one third of the almost 1800 spider bites triaged as urgent or emergency cases.

Cows and bulls rounded



out the top five, injuring more than 1000 Victorians in just four years.

Men made up two thirds of their victims and one in five were aged between 20 and 24 years old.

Snakes were the sixth-most common animal, with 851 bites, but were most likely to cause serious injury, with 94 per cent of patients classified as urgent or emergencies. About one in five snake bite victims were under 15 years old.

Melbourne snake catcher Jarrod Bingham said while the number of snake-related injuries was high, he was not surprised as his company Reptile Relocations responded to more than 1500 call-outs every year.

"The majority of these (injuries) will be the result of brown snakes and tiger snakes," he said.

Other Australian wildlife to make the emergency department list included possums (97), kangaroos (47), koalas (20) and wallabies (6) alongside farm animals such as sheep (258), pigs or boars (71), chickens (46), goats (26), alpacas (seven) and donkeys (six).

Ants were more than 20 times more likely to send a Victorian to hospital – responsible for 275 cases – than sharks or crocodiles, with the latter two recording only five cases each in four years.

sarah.booth@news.com.au



COUNTING FROM SCRATCH

ANIMAL	INJURIES	%
Cat	3513	19.2
Insect	2471	13.5
Bee	1831	10
Spider	1794	9.8
Cow/bull	1008	5.5
Snake	851	4.7
Wasp	364	2
Mosquito	336	1.8
Bird	308	1.7
Ant	275	1.5
Sheep	258	1.4
Stingray	210	1.2
Rat	109	0.6
Possum	97	0.5
Sea urchin	84	0.5
Tick	82	0.4
Pig/boar	71	0.4
Fish	65	0.4
Rabbit	58	0.3
Jellyfish	47	0.3
Kangaroo	47	0.3
Chicken	46	0.3
Leech	39	0.2
Ferret	38	0.2
Mouse	37	0.2
Goat	26	0.1
Scorpion	24	0.1
Koala	20	0.1
Fox	17	0.1
Lizard	13	0.1
Deer	9	0
Alpaca	7	0
Wallaby	6	0
Donkey	6	0
Shark	5	0
Crocodile	5	0
Other (animal not specified)	4058	22.2
TOTAL	18,250	

* Excludes dogs and horses

I've thrown aside ADHD issues

Kit Harington shot to fame as Jon Snow in HBO's hit fantasy series Game of Thrones.

However, the 37-year-old's time in the limelight caused him to struggle with mental health issues and alcoholism.

Harington entered rehab back in 2019 for alcoholism. Now, he has revealed he was diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) while there.

"I realised that my life was

hinging on this. Luckily it was the right place at the right time. I managed to forge a new life from there," the British actor divulged on a recent episode of the wellness podcast, Hidden 20%.

Harington admitted to host Ben Branson that he "entered rehab drunk, sobered up in there and went, 'Not this, not you guys in a circle. No, thank you.'"

The GOT star – the series

still airs locally on Binge – explained he was in a different rehab clinic before he went to an American facility. The second place was where he was made aware of his ADHD.

"And I left that pretty quick and said, 'I'll try to deal with this by myself,' which didn't work after about four years," he sighed. But now, the Eternals star said, he's "sober and present", focused on being a dad to his two young children.



Kit Harington as Jon Snow.

Sperm donor war victim

A Jewish Australian hairdresser who was donating sperm to a lesbian couple was shocked when he received a text from them last month telling him they no longer wanted his help – due to the current conflict in Gaza.

Jay Lazarus, 37, of Perth, who describes himself as a proud South African-born, Australian-raised gay Jewish man, said he was left reeling by their decision. He met them

via a group on Facebook and after months of tests and counselling sessions, and weekly contact, he first donated sperm in September.

After October 7, Mr Lazarus shared Instagram posts supporting Israel.

Last month the couple abruptly texted him saying they didn't feel comfortable continuing to use his sperm to conceive because they were "deeply affected" by the war.

Record influx of migrant teachers

Half help our youngest

Rebecca Borg

A record number of international teachers are calling Victorian classrooms their second home, after more educators chose to work in the state in the 2022-23 school year than at any point in the past decade.

Data from the Department of Home Affairs reveals 1629 skilled visas were granted to migrants who took on roles across the preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors at the time.

One in two expat teachers found jobs as early childhood educators, 514 migrants became secondary school teachers and 205 were employed as university lecturers.

Meanwhile, 24 worked as primary school teachers and 16 took on roles to help students with special needs.

The number of migrants who moved to Victoria to teach that year was the highest since 2013, and was almost triple the rate recorded in the 2018-19 school year.

Victoria also employed the most migrant teachers compared with the rest of the nation in the 2022-23 school year, followed by NSW, which hired 1284 international educators.

The interest to work as a teacher in Australia comes after research by US financial services provider Remitly found international residents performed 90,500 Google searches for teaching roles in Australia in the past 12 months.

Victorian Principals' Association president Andrew Dalglish welcomed the surge in interest from overseas educators and applauded the government in "trying to reduce the

impact on teacher shortages".

"Where possible, this needs to be streamlined to ensure it occurs as quickly as possible, as well as being supported by a quality induction program to prepare international teachers for not just the schools they'll be working in but also for the communities they will be living in," he said.

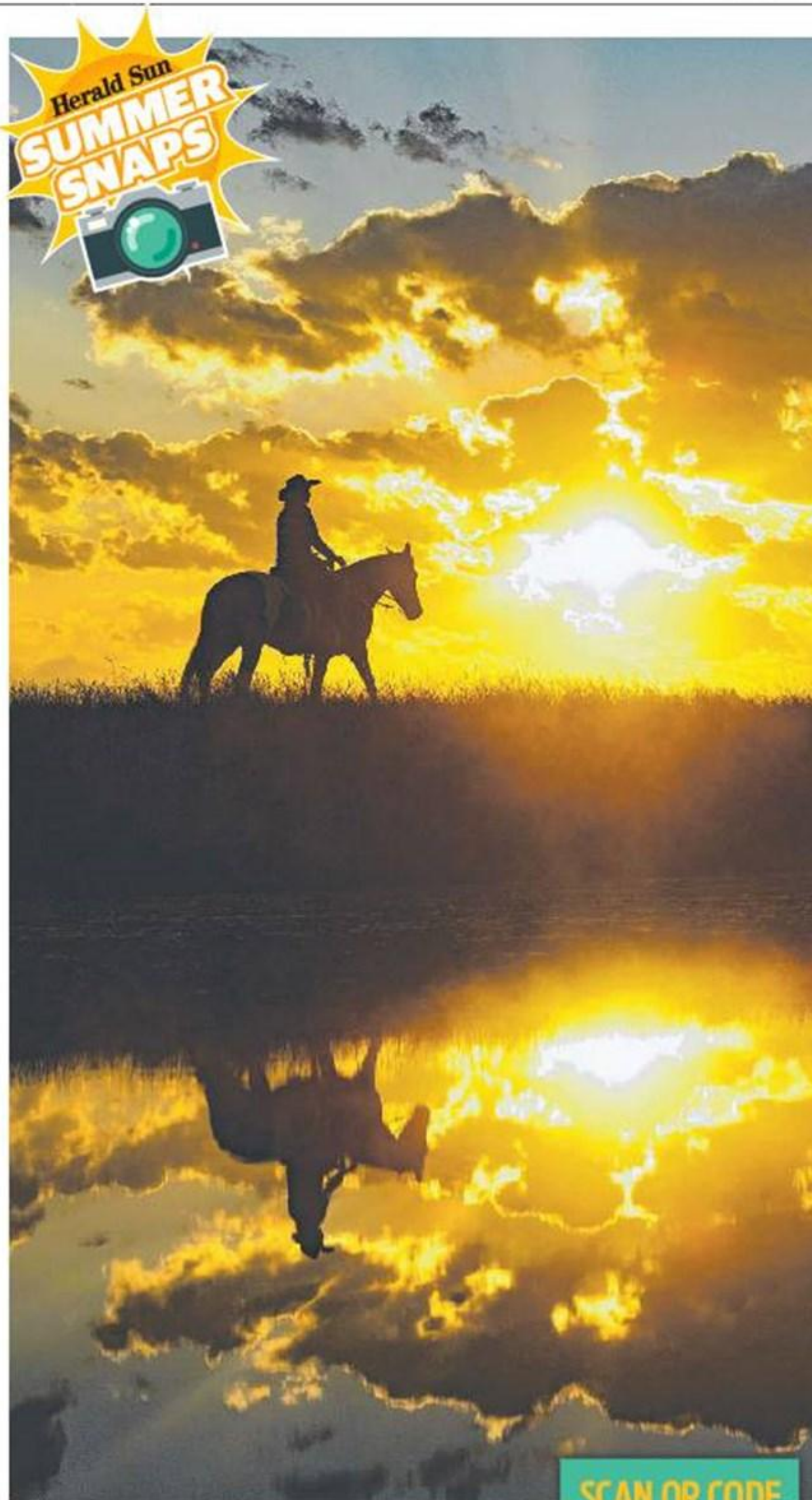
Australian Education Union Victorian branch deputy president Justin Mullaly said he also appreciated international teachers' interest in the state's schools and kinders, but called on the Allan government to focus on giving students permanent teachers.

"The Premier and Education Minister need to take real action to ensure existing school staff remain in public education through measures such as a retention payment, further efforts to curb excessive workloads and providing more support for those students doing teacher training," he said.

Opposition education spokeswoman Jess Wilson said there were 1200 teaching vacancies in Victoria, "underscoring the extent of Labor's teacher shortage crisis".

"Students will be back in classrooms in a matter of weeks, yet we still don't know how many will be without a full-time teacher or forced to learn in a doubled-up classroom," she said.

The Teach the Future campaign could be one reason for the influx of expat teachers, with the state government anticipating more to come after \$4.5 million was set aside in the Victorian 2022-23 budget for its international teacher recruitment program.



Summer pic is as good as gold

There's not much more magical than a horse ride at sunrise, as can be seen in this striking image captured by Herald Sun photographer Zoe Phillips.

Cowgirl Tierney Jasper is pictured in this photo riding her young horse Gatlin near Lancefield.

Golden light shines through the clouds and a perfect reflection is created in the still water below the rider. If you have an image that shows what summer is all about for you, send it into have it featured in our collection of reader summer photos.

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Business bust but Chang goes on

Anthony Templeton
Ian Royall

City of Melbourne councillor Jason Chang has vowed to remain Town Hall's representative for small business despite his restaurants going through a messy liquidation process.

Mr Chang was a director of the Calia restaurant that had locations in the CBD and Chadstone but this month went into liquidation as it emerged the company's debts were about \$11m.

Mr Chang confirmed his eligibility to continue as a councillor as he maintained his position as director of Puzzle Coffee, which has three locations in the City of Melbourne.

"There are no plans for me to step down from my role representing the traders and people of the great city of Melbourne," he said.

"During this challenging period, I kindly urge the media to approach the situation with respect."

"It goes against the Aussie spirit to criticise and kick business owners, traders and workers when they are down."

To be eligible to be a City of Melbourne councillor one must be a property owner, resident or director of a company that occupies a rateable property in the municipality.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp refused to answer questions about whether it was appropriate for Mr Chang to remain as the council's small business portfolio chair.

An administrator's report prepared by liquidator Glenn Crisp found that Calia lost \$2.8m in the 2023 financial year, having lost \$490,671 in the previous year and \$447,342 the year before.

Staff were owed about \$257,830 when the report was prepared in July.

"We are of the opinion that the company (Calia) has been insolvent since at least June 30, 2021," the report states.

A plan to trade out of administration fell over this month.

Mr Crisp was also the administrator appointed to Puzzle Coffee, which was able to trade out of administration.



Jason Chang

Harry faces cash 'time bomb'

Zoe Smith

Meghan Markle and Prince Harry face a "ticking time bomb" due to the failure of their Hollywood dreams, a royal expert has claimed.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have just a year left before their much-hyped \$148m Netflix deal, which they signed with the streaming giant to produce documentaries, docu-series, feature films, scripted

shows and children's programming. The California-based pair are believed to have been paid only half of their reported fee and will only get the rest of the money if they produce more content before the end of 2025, The Sun reports.

Royal commentator Richard Fitzwilliams told London's The Sun newspaper that the couple could lose everything if they didn't produce more content before their contract

ended. "They have done nothing for Netflix really, the one exception being Invictus, and that was very worth it but too long a wait," he said.

"If you simply trash your family to get megabucks, and do nothing else, then you must expect people not to take you seriously." He said the couple were "light years away" from when they were on Time magazine's list of the world's 100 top individuals.



Meghan and Harry

Artist quits AI creations

HAMBURG: An artist who shook up the cultural world with a haunting female portrait created by artificial intelligence has decided she's had enough of the new technology for now.

Working with AI to create art was ultimately "very frustrating and very limiting," Swedish-based artist Supercomposite said.

She said her experience with AI art left her "burnt out".

"It creates this dopamine path in your brain. It's very addictive to keep pushing that button and getting these results," Supercomposite said.

Supercomposite created the red-cheeked, hollow-eyed woman called "Loab" in 2022 when she was testing out the new artistic possibilities offered by AI.

Her posts on social media of Loab and about the process to create her went viral.

Libs lock in Dunkley candidate

Jack Quail

Frankston Mayor Nathan Conroy has won preselection as the Liberal candidate for the Dunkley by-election.

The federal seat on the Mornington Peninsula was vacated after the death of former Labor member Peta Murphy in early December, aged 50.

Last year Mr Conroy was re-elected for a third successive

year as mayor of Frankston City Council and was also crowned as "Melbourne's hottest mayor" by local radio station Fox FM.

Community leader Jodie Beylea is the Labor candidate.

At the preselection before rank and file members on Sunday, Mr Conroy faced off against former state MP Donna Hope and staffer Bec Buchanan, both of whom work for state MP Chris Crewther.

"I love this community. It's a privilege to serve as Mayor of Frankston City," Mr Conroy said.

"But there is so much more to be done to deliver for this community and that's why I have put myself forward for Dunkley."

The Liberal candidate also paid tribute to Ms Murphy, recognising she was "fearless and tireless in advocating for her community".

Hunting ban isn't ducking votes

Ian Royall

Animal welfare groups are stepping up pressure on the state government to ban duck hunting by revealing new data showing licensed shooters were heavily outnumbered by support for their organisations in key marginal electorates.

RSPCA Victoria, Animals Australia and Wildlife Victoria will on Monday release figures to illustrate that their supporters were greater in number than those who held duck hunting licences.

Animals Australia chief executive Glenys Oogles said the level of support in the community for a ban should embolden Labor to make the "right decision and the kindest".

A decision on the future of duck hunting is expected in February, after a parliamentary inquiry recommended last August a total ban statewide.

RSPCA Victoria chief executive Liz Walker said the committee's recommendation for a ban was based on clear and considerable evidence.

"We cannot see any reason why the Allan government would not accept and implement that recommendation," she said.

"The injury, pain, suffering, distress and death of our native birds through hunting is completely unacceptable and data shows most Victorians agree. The evidence is there. Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia banned it up to three decades ago."

The data shows that active members of the three animal welfare groups for the past five years heavily outnumber licensed shooters, especially in metropolitan seats such as Glen Waverley.

But even in Premier Jacinta Allan's electorate of Bendigo East, animal advocates total 2239, about four times as there are shooters.

Any ban would be met with resistance from shooter groups and also powerful unions including the CFMEU and ETU, which said they would defend their members' "rights to outdoor recreation".

Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party MP Jeff Bourman has said that the inquiry was biased and stacked with Labor, Greens and Animal Justice Party members.

Clooney surprises mayor

MARSEILLE: Hollywood star George Clooney has surprised the mayor of a French town with a video wishing him a Happy New Year.

Clooney addressed his video in English to Didier Bremond, the Mayor of Brignoles, in the southern Var region, where he owns an estate.

"Bonjour Didier, first of all I wanted to say Happy New Year," he said in the video.

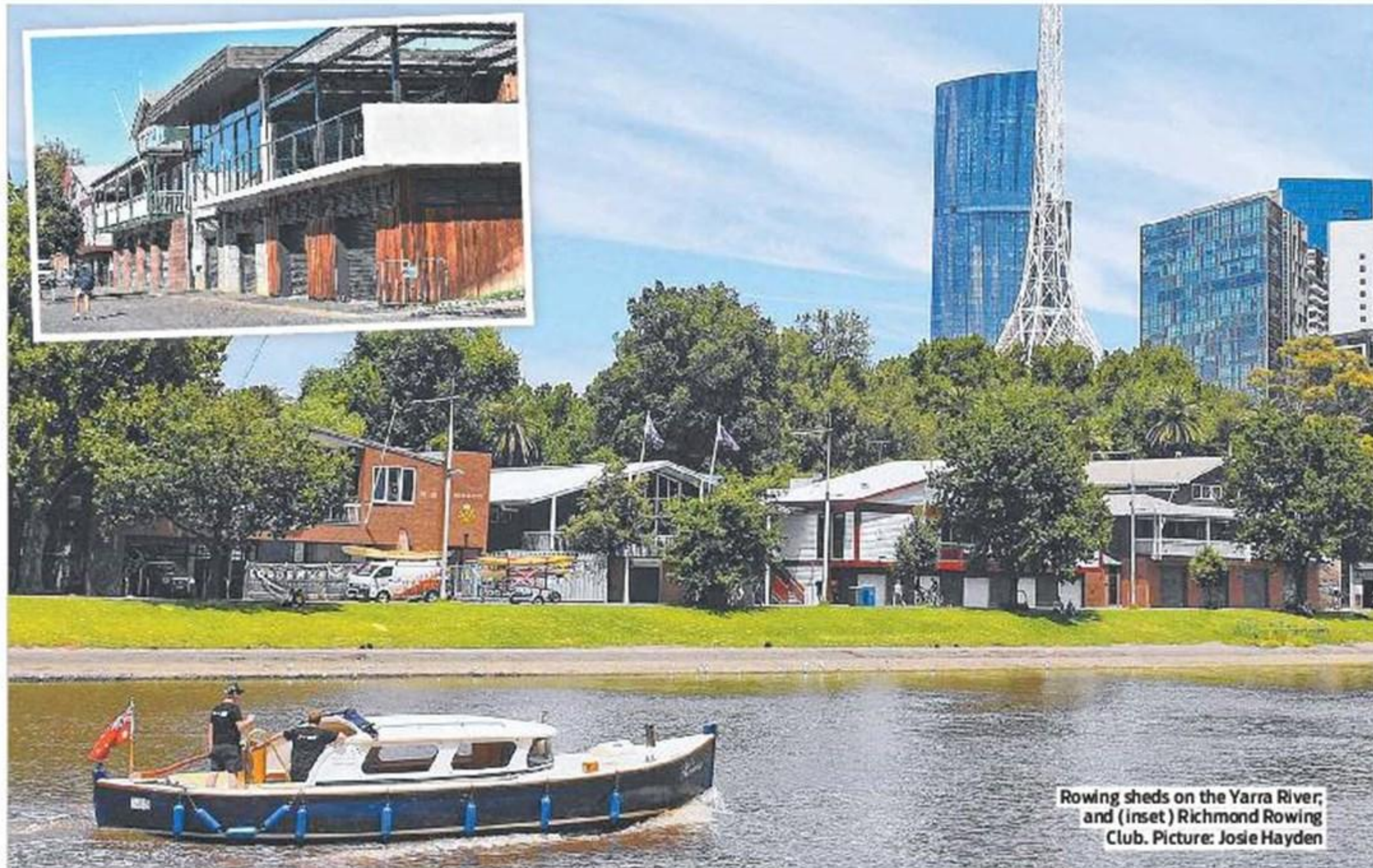
Thanking him for the time he and wife Amal had spent in Brignoles, Clooney added: "We hope everyone has a wonderful holiday."

He bought the property near the small town in May 2001. It includes an 18th-century house, a swimming pool and vineyards across 170ha.

It sits just a few kilometres from an estate owned by Hollywood producer George Lucas of Star Wars fame.



Actor George Clooney



Rowing sheds on the Yarra River, and (inset) Richmond Rowing Club. Picture: Josie Hayden

Stroke of fortune

EXCLUSIVE
Sarah Perillo

Big bucks flow to city rowing clubs

Rowing clubs in prime riverside locations charge as much as \$16,000 for events despite paying just \$1 a year in rent.

Seven rowing clubs on land estimated to be worth more than \$200m reel in big bucks by subleasing to elite schools and hiring out rooms for functions at high rates.

The clubs - Melbourne University, Yarra Yarra, Banks, Melbourne Grammar, Mercantile, Melbourne and Richmond - are situated by the Yarra in Boathouse Drive, adjacent Alexandra Gardens.

Their City of Melbourne leases run until 2034.

The clubs sublease to private schools such as St Catherine's, Brighton Grammar, Loreto, Methodist Ladies College and Ruyton. Some also hire out the premises for weddings and corporate events.

Richmond charges \$15,840 for a private licensed event for 50 guests, according to the venue hire quote calculator on its website. This drops to \$1500 for non-licensed events.

It is understood the clubs,

mainly run by volunteers, are technically open to the public for a price but focus on "high-performance rowing".

Since 2012, the clubs have invested about \$7m in the sheds. They are responsible for repairs, maintenance and upgrades.

Melbourne University charges \$710 to \$975 a year for adult members who row for the club. Memberships are available for students - \$885 for performance rowers and \$480 for non-competitive rowers. Alumni can have access to the boathouse and gym for \$410.

Its website says clubhouse and equipment users must be

"financial members of MUBC" except when arrangements are made with other "schools, club, institute or visitor", including Xavier College, Trinity Grammar and the Victorian Institute of Sport.

Melbourne Grammar's website says its boat club is a "not-for-profit parent support group that co-ordinates season events and logistics for regattas and raises much-needed funds for equipment, skills development, events and other support not otherwise available from the school".

Josh Rutman, head of capital markets Victoria at Jones Lang LaSalle, said that based on city land values of \$30,000

to \$50,000 a square metre, the buildings were worth \$239m.

Mr Rutman said it was "incredibly rare" to find waterfront real estate in Melbourne.

"Anything that ever comes up along the Yarra, in or close to the city, receives a great deal of interest from local and offshore investors," he said.

Council Watch president Dean Hurlston said the "peppercorn rents" amounted to the council effectively giving land away because the tenant was an organisation that provided a public benefit.

"We would want to be seeing a really good community benefit that council can articulate to understand why

they would give this piece of land away," he said.

"Because it's the City of Melbourne residents who are essentially foregoing council money and income."

"If a community can't openly access the facilities, that's not right. If it's an exclusive rowing club that's been holding exclusive events, time to revisit. I'm sure residents don't want councils to be subsidising private schools or private clubs for their own commercial use."

Yarra Yarra said it was "anything but a purely high performance-focused club" and offered a popular learn to row program.

It could host a "small number" of licensed events for non-members as part of a 4 strict liquor licence agreement to raise funds for maintenance, repair and replacement.

"We are keenly aware of the privilege that is afforded us by the terms of our agreement with the City of Melbourne ... without this type of lease the sport of rowing would most likely disappear from the banks of the Yarra," it said.

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'Stop this – my dream's gone'

Lauren Hutchinson

The owner of a shop destroyed in the latest firebombing on Sunday is pleading for an end to Melbourne's tobacco wars.

Con Khalil, who has owned the shop since 1996, told the Herald Sun it was lucky no one was inside when explosions turned the Smeaton Court, Craigieburn store into a fireball.

"(Over the years) a few things have happened like robberies but this is... all my dreams gone," he said.

"I just want to say to the people that did this, please stop."

"If you want something from the shop, break in and get it. Don't burn it."

Mr Khalil said the shop had previously been a milk bar but became a tobacconist about two years ago.

He said the tenant was in Lebanon, but had called him about 7am to tell him the property had been gutted.

Police and firefighters were called to the shop – at the corner of Smeaton Court and Bridgewater Rd – about 3.30am on Sunday.

Videos on social media showed flames shooting metres high and embers floating down, while loud crackling sounds could be heard.

A house at the rear of the shop was also damaged.

Neighbour Stephen Damley told the Herald Sun he woke to explosions.

"I got up to see what it was and the shop was on fire, there were flames coming out the front door," he said.

"There were explosions going off and... the whole place went up."

"When the explosions were going off debris was flying overhead and the house was shaking."

Kalhara Kukulhee, who lives opposite the shop, said the huge blaze was scary.

"It was like New Year's Eve fireworks," he said.

The Craigieburn fire is the third tobacco shop blaze in a week. A shop in Altona was torched twice in two days.

Four men with links to the Finks outlaw motorcycles gang were charged over six fire bombings at tobacco shops across Melbourne in recent weeks.



The Craigieburn tobacconist destroyed by fire in the early hours of Sunday. Pictures: TikTok, Andrew Hershaw, Facebook

Shop attacks cost a bomb

Mark Buttler
Regan Hodge

Damage bill \$10m and premiums may rise

The damage bill for Melbourne's fiery tobacco warfare is estimated to be \$10m.

And there are concerns from other business sectors about the potential risk in operating close to those involved in the illicit smoke trade.

Much of the huge cost of the destructive rampage since March last year is damage to about 20 tobacco stores set alight since last March.

In many of those incidents, one or more vehicles were also set alight.

In recent months, an even more costly range of business

targets has been hit. Two Docklands restaurants burnt in quick succession late last year.

At the Karizma venue, owned by western suburbs organised crime figure Fadi Haddara, in November two men smashed windows and poured fuel around before setting it alight.

In December, nearby Almina restaurant was also fire-bombed.

This month the Capriccio ice creamery in Williamstown was torched in a late-night attack that came just days after a gym

in Truganina suffered the same fate.

There have also been arson incidents at another gym and a cafe, and a Williamstown panel shop and several cars were wrecked by fire in October.

These incidents are under investigation by the Lunar task force set up three months ago as tobacco shops went up in flames.

One tobacco industry source said the total damage bill would be in the vicinity of "\$10m – at least".

Detective Inspector Graham

Banks said on the weekend he expected action to be taken by those insuring or subletting tobacco businesses.

"When you've got shopping centre owners that are aware they've got a store that's selling illicit products, I'd expect them to make an inquiry and look into the leasehold," he said.

"I expect agencies such as insurance councils to have a view about insuring premises that are selling only illicit products."

Meanwhile, small businesses operating next door to Melbourne's tobacco stores are

becoming increasingly worried about their safety and fear insurers will jack up premiums to cover the risks.

More than a dozen retailers, particularly newsagents, have expressed concern over the widespread arson which often put uninvolved neighbouring businesses in the firing line.

One industry figure said he expected insurance companies to raise the cost of premiums for businesses operating near tobacco and vape stores.

He says retailers are "nervous" because those who share

roofs with tobacco stores have a "specific risk".

A spokesman for the Insurance Council of Australia said it had not been approached about tobacco shop fires and declined to comment on implications for premiums.

Last week law firm Local Lawyers suffered smoke damage after the business beneath it, Wolf Cafe & Eatery, was a target for arsonists in Altona North.

In October, an accounting firm operating next to a tobacco shop in Station St, Oakleigh was set alight as offenders torched both businesses operating under the same building.

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Bill Cherry (Elvis) and Annika Starander Weaver (Cher), two of the Legends in Concert stars. Picture: Brendan Beckett

Legendary doubles return

A Las Vegas tribute show has returned for the summer, celebrating stars such as Elvis Presley, Cher, Freddie Mercury, Adele, Jon Bon Jovi, Elton John and Shania Twain.

Legends in Concert production manager Mark Kogan, bringing the show to

Victoria for a sixth time, promised a fun night at the "ultimate, feel-good" tribute show. "We're thrilled to be here, playing in one of the best venues I've ever been in out of all my touring days," he said.

"The songs will make people's hearts sing."

Kogan – who worked with the real Elvis – said of his Elvis performer Bill Cherry: "His movements and his voice are just like Elvis. He's one of the best I've seen."

Legends in Concert will perform at The Palms at Crown until January 27. www.legendsinconcert.com

Childcare set to cost more

Unless Labor commits to pay rise

EXCLUSIVE
Clare Armstrong

Families face higher childcare costs or a shortage of places for their kids if Labor does not commit funds to cover a much-needed wage increase for early educators.

Unions and employers currently at the negotiating table are still waiting on the federal government to indicate if, and how much, it is willing to contribute to a pay rise needed to help the struggling sector retain and attract staff.

The talks are the first major test of Labor's controversial multi-employer bargaining reforms, which the government previously championed as the ideal mechanism for low-paid sectors like childcare.

Sources familiar with the negotiations say if Labor fails to step up, childcare providers will have to pass on costs to families, or if an agreement can't be reached then the sector will be unlikely to attract

the staff needed to meet the demand for places.

In a December 18 letter sent to unions, childcare associations and employers involved in the negotiations, lawyers for the government said it would not be able to provide information about its position until February.

This leaves only weeks for an agreement to be reached in time for any additional government funding to be included in the May budget.

In the letter, the government said should it be "convinced" of the need for more supplementary funding, it may seek "co-contributions" from providers while also requiring no costs be passed on to families.

United Workers' Union executive director of early education Helen Gibbons said a wage increase to help retain and attract extra staff was the "key" to unlocking more affordable childcare places for Australian families.

"I don't think there's any-

body across the sector that doesn't think that early educators should get a pay rise, the sticking point really is how is it funded," she said.

Ms Gibbons said staff shortages had led to centres "closing rooms and turning parents away" across the country just as Labor's "cheaper childcare" policy came into effect last July.

"It is more affordable now, but families can't get access," she said. "So there's a real pressure on government to be able to deliver on what was a key election promise. This wage increase is absolutely integral."

Education Minister Jason Clare acknowledged more work was needed to retain childcare workers and keep the service available to families.

"We have cut the cost of childcare and there are 14,000 more early childhood workers than there were 18 months ago, but there is still a lot more to do," Mr Clare said.

clare.armstrong@news.com.au



Pam, Kay & Inga, Residents

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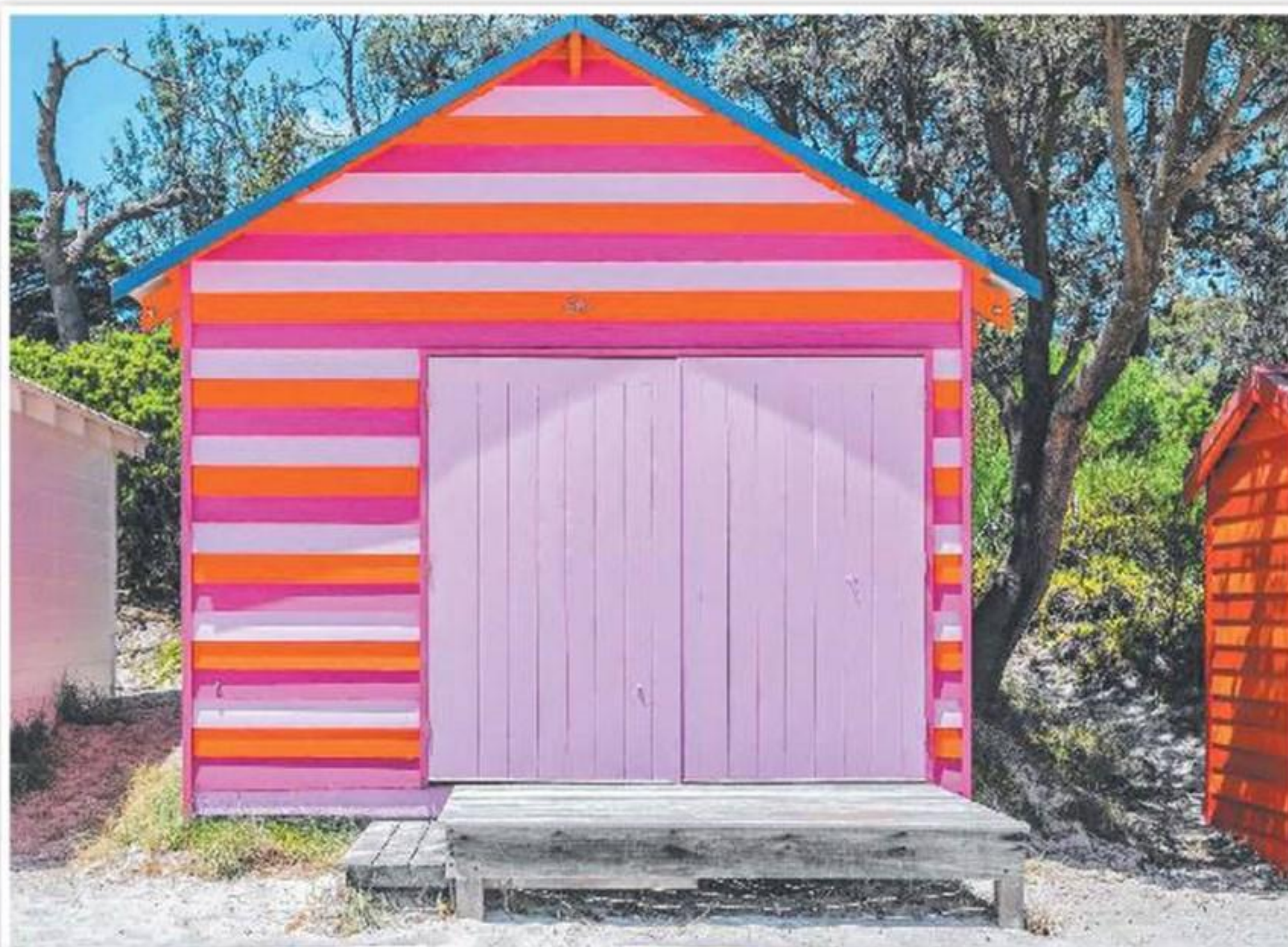
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Carlton's Matthew Owies and (above and right) the family beach box now for sale at McCrae.



Vile kid abuse footage

Ex cop facing 110 charges

EXCLUSIVE
Laura Placella

A Victoria Police senior constable allegedly possessed 168 hours of vile video footage of children being sexually abused before he was caught and charged with 110 criminal offences.

The Herald Sun can reveal Alan Hawley, 49, who has since resigned from the force, fronted the Melbourne Magistrates' Court late last year where he indicated he would plead guilty to child abuse material charges.

Court documents obtained by the Herald Sun allege Mr Hawley possessed 19,856 images and videos of child abuse across six devices, including two phones, three USB storage devices and a SD card.

Nearly half of the files depicted real children under the age of 13, according to a hi-tech image categorisation program, while more than half depicted teenagers.

A "large number" of computer-generated child abuse material was also located on the devices.

The combined "playing time" of the video files equated to more than 168 hours of footage of children being "sexually exploited/abused".

Mr Hawley, who racked up 11 years of service, was a leading senior constable working as a crime scene officer at the Sunshine police station when he was arrested in January last year.

According to court documents, he was at home with his wife, when investigators descended on their property to

execute a raid. His wife answered the door as Mr Hawley stood behind her in the entrance.

"Do you know why we are here?" the officers asked him.

"Yep. Child exploitation," he replied.

Victoria Police's joint anti-child exploitation team was alerted to Mr Hawley in December 2022 after it received information he was uploading child abuse material via Google and Kik – an instant messaging app – using an email account in his name.

Investigators located an Apple iPhone at his house, which allegedly contained a "large number of child abuse material" as well as chats in which child abuse material had been transmitted.

He was charged with 34 counts of producing child abuse material, 36 counts of transmitting child abuse material, 22 counts of using a carriage service to cause offence and six counts of possessing child abuse material, among other offences.

In December, Mr Hawley told Magistrate Belinda Wallington he intends to plead guilty in the County Court, where he will be sentenced.

Ms Wallington said she would alert the higher court to his plea.

Mr Hawley – who is representing himself – will now enter negotiations with prosecutors to determine which charges he will plead guilty to.

The court heard some of the charges are likely to be rolled up.

Mr Hawley will front the County Court on February 1.

Blue's family think outside the box

Sarah Petty

A footy star's family is selling their prized beach box by the pristine beach at McCrae.

The grandparents of Carlton Football Club forward Matthew Owies have been custodians of beach box number 26 on the foreshore for about 56 years, inheriting it from their own parents.

Owies signed with Carlton in 2018 as a rookie after returning from Hawaii where he was pursuing a basketball career.

He made his senior AFL

debut in 2020 and has since played 49 games.

His father, David, said when he was growing up, he had "awesome times" playing on the beach at McCrae, particularly in the festive seasons.

His son also was able to spend part of his childhood playing in the sand and enjoying the beach box.

"Just having a beach box there was pretty special, you could seek a bit of shelter from the sun, also just store some things down there like beach games and whatnot," Mr Owies said. "It was great

times; those in the community have used it too."

While the beach box hadn't been used as a "Carlton mecca" for Matthew and his clubmates, Mr Owies said quite a few people had used it as a backdrop for their wedding photos.

"The beach is actually like a river; it would be ideal for that sort of recovery (for footy players); rest and relaxation is what we used it for," he said.

The Owies have \$460,000-\$500,000 price hopes for the beach box. Nearby beach box number

64 sold 11 months ago for \$450,000. Beach box 18A was the last to sell in the same strip, fetching \$350,000 in late 2020.

Belle Property Rosebud and Dromana sales consultant Jarrod Eastwood said beach boxes had doubled in value in the last 10 years. "People ring us and just can't believe what they actually go for," he said.

"They're very, very tightly held on that little strip across from the road from the McCrae shops." Boatshed 26 goes to auction on Saturday 27 January, at 12:30pm.

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Hamas 'targets' Europe

Mossad foils plot to attack Israeli embassy in Sweden

TEL AVIV: A Hamas terror plot targeting Israel's embassy in Sweden and Jewish sites in Europe has been thwarted by Israeli intelligence agencies Mossad and Shin Bet, according to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The network, allegedly orchestrated by Hamas commanders in Lebanon, had plans for more attacks in Europe, involving the acquisition of drones and collaboration with European criminal organisations, Israel said.

"Israel had discovered details on theatres of operation, terror targets, and on those involved in carrying out attacks



Benjamin Netanyahu

— from Hamas commanders in Lebanon to the last of the attackers in the operational infrastructure," Mr Netanyahu's office said in a statement.

This revelation follows a series of uncovered plots in Europe in recent weeks.

In December, European authorities arrested Hamas cells in Denmark, Germany, and Holland, suspecting their involvement in plotting attacks on Jewish targets.

Danish police found seven individuals linked to a foiled terror attack in December had Hamas connections, confirming Mr Netanyahu's assertion about Hamas expanding its operations into Europe.

"The alleged connection to Hamas confirms that the threat against Denmark is serious, but luckily we have a strong police and intelligence service doing their best to protect us every day," Danish Jus-

tice Minister Peter Hummelgaard said.

Meanwhile, Mr Netanyahu doubled down on his vows to defeat Hamas, as the UN marked the 100th day of the war, saying it was "staining humanity".

"The massive death, destruction, displacement, hunger, loss and grief of the last 100 days are staining our shared humanity," the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, Philippe Lazzarini, said in the Gaza Strip.

And the International Court of Justice in The Hague last week heard arguments in a case launched by South Africa

accusing Israel of breaching the UN Genocide Convention.

But Mr Netanyahu insisted no court or military foe could stop Israel from destroying Hamas.

"No one will stop us — not The Hague, not the Axis of Evil and no one else," he said.

"It is possible and necessary to continue until victory, and we will do it," he said, claiming most Hamas battalions in Gaza had been "eliminated".

Health officials in Gaza said recent Israeli strikes killed at least 60 people, while Israel said it struck dozens of rocket launchers that were "ready to be used" in central Gaza.

US sends 'message' to Iran on Houthis

SANAA: The US launched fresh strikes against Houthi rebels in Yemen as President Joe Biden said he had delivered a "private message" to Iran about its links to the group.

The strikes came a day after US and British forces hit scores of targets in Yemen, heightening fears that Israel's war with Palestinian Hamas militants could engulf the region.

The Houthis, who say they are acting in solidarity with Gaza, have carried out missile and drone attacks on what they deem Israeli-linked shipping on the key Red Sea trade route.

Iran is suspected of supplying the Houthis with weapons and intelligence, but Tehran denies involvement. Nevertheless, Mr Biden said his government had given Iran a message.

"We delivered it privately and we're confident we're well-prepared," he said.

US Central Command said its forces attacked a Houthi radar site early on Saturday as "a follow-on action" related to the previous day's strikes.

A Houthi-allied military source said a site on the outskirts of the Red Sea port city of Hodeida which the rebels used to launch a rocket was hit.

The Houthis' official media earlier said Al-Dailami airbase in Yemen's rebel-held capital Sanaa had been struck in the latest bombardment.

Rebel forces in north Sanaa had shut the area around the airbase and only residents with permits from neighbourhood chiefs were allowed to enter.

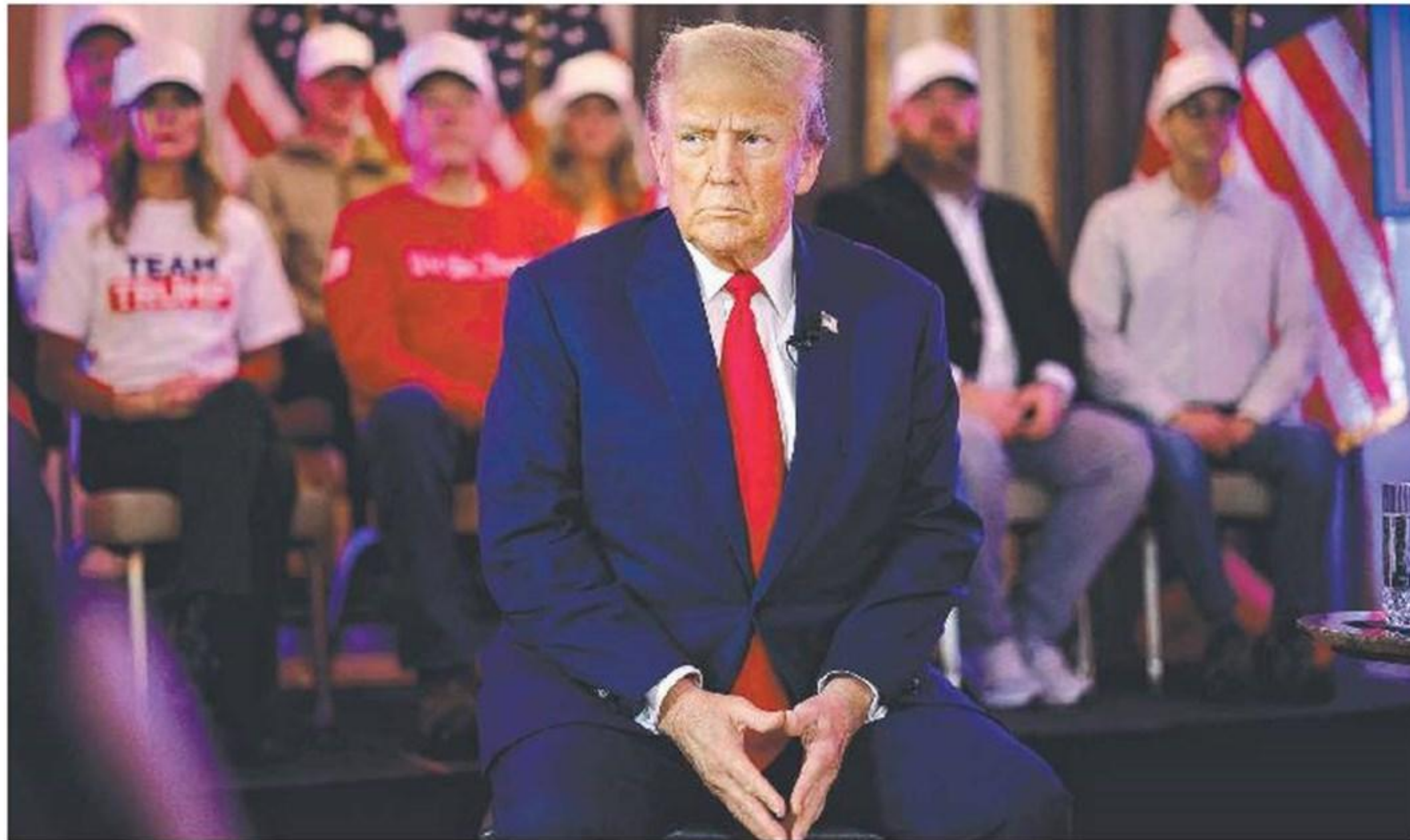
UN special envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg urged "all involved" to avoid actions that would endanger maritime trade and "fuel regional tensions at this critical time".

Mr Grundberg noted "with serious concern" the impact of the "increasingly precarious regional context" on Yemen and called for diplomacy to be prioritised.

Britain, the United States and eight allies — including Australia — said strikes on Friday aimed to "de-escalate tensions", but the Houthis vowed to continue their attacks.



Joe Biden



Sub-zero temperatures and blizzards forced Donald Trump into an indoor 'tele-rally' in Des Moines as the Iowa caucuses kick off the US election year. Picture: Getty

Election heats up in frigid Iowa caucuses

DES MOINES: Voters will venture into sub-zero temperatures on Monday to kick off the Republican presidential nomination race with the Iowa caucuses, the first major test of whether runaway front-runner Donald Trump is as much of

a sure thing as he appears. With a commanding lead in polls, the ex-president is expected easily to win the Midwestern state's first-in-the-nation vote as he bids to be the Republican standard-bearer against President Joe Biden in November.

But Iowans may have to contend with the coldest conditions in the modern era of presidential election campaigns, with blizzards and a potential wind chill of minus 32 degrees.

Trump and his leading rivals, Nikki Haley and Ron

DeSantis, were forced to cancel appearances because of the weather as the threat to the turnout added intrigue to the campaign.

Despite his poll strength, Trump's multiple legal cases still hang over him.

"If DeSantis's massive ground effort, coupled with a recent Haley surge, can drag Trump under 50 percent by several points, that will be the first meaningful sign that Trump can be defeated," said political analyst Alex Avetoom.

Buried alive in landslide

BOGOTA: At least 33 people have been killed in landslides in Colombia, including many who had taken shelter in a house after the road they were travelling on was cut off. "I deeply regret the death of 33 people in this tragedy, mostly children, according to preliminary reports," vice president Francia Marquez wrote on social media.

Firefighters, soldiers and local residents slogged

through deep mud and debris in hopes of finding survivors, while relatives stood nearby.

Many travellers had left their cars to take shelter in a house near the municipality of Carmen de Atrato.

"But unfortunately, a landslide came and buried them," said a local official.

Images on social media showed part of a mountain breaking loose and crashing down onto a line of cars.



Soldiers patrol Ecuador's streets

Hostages freed as chaos reigns

QUITO: More than 40 Ecuador prison officials taken hostage by inmates have been freed, as the country grapples with a brutal campaign of gang terror.

The 24 guards and 17 administrative employees had been released, the SNAI prisons agency said, while 133 guards and three employees continue to be held hostage.

The workers were taken captive after President Daniel

Noboa last week launched a military takedown of criminal groups, sparking a deadly confrontation with narco gangs.

The crisis was triggered by the escape from Guayaquil prison of one of the country's most powerful narco bosses, Jose Adolfo Macias, followed by prison riots, hostage-taking and attacks on police.

At least 19 people have died in the violence, including a guard killed on Saturday in

clashes with inmates in El Oro near the border with Peru.

According to the latest official report, 859 suspects have been arrested, 25 escaped detainees have been recaptured, five "terrorists" shot dead and 57 kidnapped people have been released.

A chilling video filmed in Machala prison shows the corpse of a prisoner wrapped in plastic thrown into the street from inside the jail.

Andrew Bolt



“Woolworths made the politics very clear by lecturing customers who complained

Woke bullies have very short shelf life

Woolworths is a perfect example of the woke corporate bully – and a hypocrite – so how good to see it getting the slap it so richly deserves.

And how refreshing to have a Liberal Opposition leader again with the courage to fight these culture wars, with Peter Dutton urging customers to shop somewhere more patriotic, like Coles.

The important thing to know about Woolworths' ban on selling Australia Day merchandise is that it's political. It's political in that dictatorial and destructive way that's turning Australia into a nation of warring tribes.

Woolworths made the politics very clear by lecturing customers who complained: “We recognise the national holiday, but also respect that Australia Day means different things to different parts of the community and want to show respect to all who come into our stores.”

That sentence is so plainly stupid, illogical and false that you wonder how Woolies manages to think clearly enough to stay in business. Other than by putting the squeeze on farmers, I mean.

Yes, Australia Day does mean “different things to different people”, but Woolworths is showing no respect to those customers who think it's a great day to celebrate a great country, and are shopping for some bunting, or flag-themed napkins or even a bucket hat for their barbie.

Woolworths is just letting an intolerant anti-Australia Day minority stop the rest of its customers from buying the merch they want. It is picking a side – the side of the bullies and dividers.

More importantly, it's once more promoting the tribes of Australia, but not the country that gives them all a common home.

For instance, Woolworths promotes the race-based NAIDOC week – of the National Aborigines' and Islanders' Day Observance Committee – as well as the Muslim Ramadan and Hindu Diwali.

Most infamously, its Big W stores last year played in-store ads promoting Labor's Aboriginal-only Voice to Parliament until so many customers and even staff complained that they had to switch them off. Woolworths also donated \$155m to the Yes campaign without asking permission from its shareholders



Australia Day merchandise, no longer available at your nearest Woolworths.

before giving away their money – which sounds to me awfully like theft.

What's more, Woolworths also sold a book promoting the Voice, co-written by leading Voice campaigner Thomas Mayo.

That strips bare Woolworths' gross hypocrisy, since the Voice also meant “different things to different people”. In fact, 60 per cent of Australians – almost certainly including 60 per cent of Woolworths' shoppers – thought the Voice was racist and a menace and voted against it, yet Woolies never banned the sale of this Voice-themed book of propaganda.

No, Woolies stuffed its race politics down the throats of customers who hated it, and now bans Australia Day merchandise for customers who like it.

Like I said, it's political, and part of a sickness of our elites. It's suicidal to disrespect what unites us, while celebrating what divides. That's how

things fall apart. I hope it also now costs Woolworths customers.

So who is driving this?

Many business leaders and board members are of a woke tribe themselves, both to prove they're not just greedy capitalists and because being woke spares them from having to think for themselves. It's also dangerous not to be woke because social media warriors could rip into them and cost them nice board jobs with government agencies and “progressive” corporates like Qantas.

Sure, maybe Woolworths is different, and actually filled with rugged free-thinking individualists. That said, on its board is Holly Kramer, for instance, who is also a director of the Goodes-O'Loughlin Foundation set up by activist ex-footballers Adam Goodes and Michael O'Loughlin, who identify as Aboriginal.

Goodes campaigned for the Voice

and is also on Woolworths' First Nations Advisory Board, which advises the supermarket giant on “reconciliation” but seems instead to be fostering division. Most of its members identify as Aboriginal even though they also have white ancestry.

Why is Woolworths so keen on dividing people by race? Why does this overgrown grocer push a race politics that inevitably divides us, and push it so hard that it bans customers from buying merchandise celebrating this country's national day?

Here again is one of our biggest companies playing the bully and setting people against each other. It's also showing disrespect to our nation.

So, yes, boycott Woolies. Go instead to IGA or to Coles, which still sells Australia Day stuff. Here is one way that even the humblest shopper can teach an arrogant corporate giant a sharp and necessary lesson in freedom and in loyalty.

We stood firm, 16 strong!

The Albanese government is making us look not just helpless but embarrassing. Check the humiliating boast on Friday by Defence Minister Richard Marles.

Marles announced Australia had “supported” the “very important” military strikes on Yemen's Houthi Islamist rebels, who'd been firing missiles and attack drones at ships in the Red Sea, gateway to the Suez Canal, to punish Israel.

But how had we “supported” these strikes on 60 targets by US and British warships, submarines and fighter jets?

After all, this government couldn't send even one ship when the US asked last month for help protecting this critical shipping lane. We didn't have the sailors, it seems, or weapons to shoot down the Houthi's drones.

So what was our “support”? Well, said Marles, Australia had “personnel in the operational headquarters”. Which means some of the 16 – just 16 – people the government could spare for this “very important” mission were sitting behind a computer.

Wow. Hope China, with its 370 ships and submarines and its two million-strong army, saw and trembled at our mighty 16.

Unfortunately, this is just the latest example of our frightening weakness as the new axis of evil – China, Russia, North Korea and Iran, which supplies the Houthi – spreads war from Ukraine to the Red Sea.

Look at Ukraine, desperately trying to stop the Russian invaders who are using arms from Iran and North Korea. Our government has turned off the tap of military supplies.

It's also giving Israel – under attack from the Iranian-backed Hamas terrorists – nothing, except criticism. In fact, we're now so toothless that even last week's riots in Papua New Guinea spelled danger for us.

It's not just the threat of refugees. The mobs there burned down some Chinese stores, prompting China to warn PNG to protect any Chinese.

The “or else” wasn't spelled out, but consider the Solomon Islands, within missile range of Brisbane.

When rioters there torched Chinese businesses, China persuaded (bribed?) the government to let China's police be stationed on the islands.

Could PNG, also corrupt, be tempted, too? It can't expect much urgent help in a riot from Australia, anyway. The Albanese government has just scrapped our troop-lift Taipan helicopters for safety reasons, making landing troops trickier.

Thank heavens PNG has so far asked for just one helicopter. We can still manage that. I hope.

Herald Sun

EDITORIAL

Global tests for democracy

Democracy faces a major test in 2024 as half the world's population prepares to vote in more than 50 national elections.

An increasing polarisation of views in politics, magnified and spread through the rise of social media – platforms that tripled their user bases to almost five billion people in the past decade – has led to democratic processes and trust being questioned on a scale never before imagined.

Beyond the free-flow of digital information with all its facts, falsehoods and emotion, a growing divide in social structures, financial standing and growing sense of insecurity has led to many who feel left behind in modern economies venting against the governance systems in place.

Rising geopolitical instability – war in eastern Europe and the Middle East, tensions in trade channels in the Red Sea, South China Sea and Taiwan Strait – and a growing list of authoritarian states are combining to threaten international peace, prosperity and security.

Amid the undeniable rise of China as the world's second-biggest economy (with 18 per cent of the planet's GDP), President Xi Jinping has threatened to forcibly reunify Taiwan, has clamped down on the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, and pursued his country's expansion and influence across the South China Sea into the Indo-Pacific and Africa, often by using trade as a weapon and debt-trap investment as a lure.

February marks two years of horrendous warfare after Russian President Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion of democratic Ukraine, a completely unjustifiable act that ignited the biggest conflict in Europe since the dark days of World War II.

Putin and Xi – who jointly affirmed their "no limits" friendship on the eve of that invasion, and since – lead nations that engage in mass cyber attacks

against the West and interfere in elections, strategies intended, at their core, to displace the US as the global superpower, to reshape the international rules-based system and world order.

As a result, we have now entered what many analysts are calling the Second Cold War.

An incendiary divide fractures the US political landscape – on the one hand the November 5 election prospect of Donald Trump's White House return, shadowed by his criminal indictments, unknown ramifications and a possible Republican withdrawal of crucial support for Ukraine's defence.

On the other hand is a possible four more years of Democrat incumbent Joe Biden, who will be near-on 86 when a second term ends.

After Bangladesh and Taiwan elections, over the coming year Russia, Britain and India face polls, along with a long list of Eurasian, central and South American and African democracies and pseudo-democracies, from Indonesia, Pakistan, and Mexico to El Salvador and South Africa, some of which hobble oppositions or run predetermined elections.

Amid security, economic and mass migration issues, voters in the 27-nation EU will also elect a new parliament in June.

In its 2023 summary report, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance warned "democracy is still in trouble, stagnant at best, and declining in many places".

Democratic principles drive transparency, accountability, ideas, egalitarianism, opportunity and commerce. And while Australia is, thankfully, one of the world's strongest democracies, the inherent benefits and fairness of democracy cannot be taken for granted across the world.

Democracies are not perfect but history shows the alternatives are marked by brutality and economic failure.

The world this year needs loud backing for robust democracies.

Unit living on the up

The sky-high price of property has put the average family home out of reach for many Australians.

In the post-pandemic period alone, median house prices have continued to race upwards at a dizzying clip.

And as interest rates ratcheted back to the higher end of long-term averages, monthly mortgage costs and the inability to access loans to meet high prices have crunched aspiring buyers.

Even the alternatives in tree-change options for lower prices in regional areas were largely nullified as tens of thousands of buyers have headed away from the capital cities.

When combined with government policies to ramp up immigration levels that place huge pressures on housing stocks, it's therefore little wonder that higher-density accommodation is growing as an alternative.

Today, the Herald Sun reports on data from the Real Estate Institute of Victoria that show 117 of 141 suburbs assessed last year had median unit prices outperform the median house prices. The figures show demand-cost pressures for apartments, townhouses and flats are producing a faster rise in prices.

Problem is, the stretched construction sector will struggle to meet demand for more stock

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Skin care so costly

Living in a sun-loving country like Australia, it is mind-boggling to this fair-skinned redhead that skin checks are not more highly regarded. But cost is a major factor.

I have full high-standard private health insurance costing \$520 a month yet I could not claim for a dermatologist to do a "referred by doctor" skin check, except for Medibank rebate of \$80.

Surely a private health fund member should be able to claim for a dermatologist to do a skin check and receive an additional rebate?

We are now told that the number of Aussies having tests done is dropping, and I believe that it is entirely a cost factor. To expect people to be out of pocket – in my case, \$310 for initial attendance with a rebate of \$80, and yearly follow-up appointment at a cost of \$230 with rebate of \$40 – is something that some decide is unaffordable.

Decisions on having health checks should not have to be based on cost.
Karen Bull, Melbourne

Not a tan to die for

As the summer sun intensifies this year, so does the increase in cases of skin cancer ("Deadly skin cancer rates set to rocket", HS, 12/1).

Former and current surfers, for example, who live for the ocean are now unfortunately incurring skin cancers in various forms.

When coconut oil was once used by some as a tanning lotion, and sunburn a common occurrence, the unsupervised beach barbecue was not the only summer disaster.

Public skin cancer prevention campaigns cogently underline that no tan is worth dying for.
Kenneth Gregson, Swansea, Tas

The right day

We, the people, are the arbiters of when and how Australia Day ought to be recognised and celebrated. The current controversial Australia Day was legislated as January 26 by politicians' whim, the day in history a British military penal colony was established in what is now NSW. Australia per se did not exist until over a century later.

I would contend that the correct day for recognition of Australia Day should be the day our democratic, multicultural, sovereign commonwealth nation was granted a Constitution. Specifically, January 1, 1901. If this date were put to a referendum of the people of Australia following a constitutional convention, free of political and woke diversion and nonsense, it could possibly pass – and several other issues may be resolved as a result.
Wyn Carnie, Clifton Springs

Or maybe this day

If Australia Day is to be changed, why not choose September 17? On that date in 1900, Queen Victoria signed a document that proclaimed the

TEXT TALK

How come China can fix their roads in six days after a quake but we can't fix potholes on our major highways in years?
Bernadette T, Oakleigh South

All Melbourne ratepayers would like our city to be kept clean and tidy all the time, not just when visitors come to sporting events.
Joan, Dandenong North

Everybody who takes illegal drugs knows they can be dangerous, but continue to use them. About time they took some personal responsibility.
Frank, Box Hill North

My guess is the "recreational" drugs make that so-called music sound better.
Colin, Epping

All this fuss over Woolworths not stocking Australia Day merchandise – it's just cheap Chinese-made junk that ends up in the bin the next day.
Paul Kneebone, Mitcham

Well done Woolies, no more "made in China" plastic crap for Australia Day.
John, Ringwood

If I lose my Woolies job because of Peter Dutton's call for a boycott, will he then pay my wages? No, I didn't think so.
Jack D, Blackburn

Instead of trying to stop people jumping into the water at The Pillars at Mt Martha, make it safer by displaying a low-tide warning chart.
Wayne, Mt Eliza

Mary and Kate are all class and deserving of their royal roles.
Marilyn, Fawkner

"If Trump comes back, do we want him as our ally?" (Opinion, 12/1.) Yes, we do.
Blinky, Fern Tree Gully

federation of six Australian colonies, thus creating the Commonwealth of Australia.
Margaret Glass, Brighton

Exclusions endure

If we cannot agree on a day to celebrate being Australian, then let's abandon the whole idea until such time as we are more united.

At present, everything that is happening is doing more to divide us more into tribes than we are already.

For those of the woke community whose buzzword is "inclusion", remember that every time you demand changes that include a particular group in our society, you

exclude another group who then do not feel included.

Sadly, I cannot see us becoming a united country ever again.

June Harvey, Drouin

Supply and demand

Woolies are not telling us what to buy with their decision to not sell Australia Day items, as some suggest. They and all traders choose what to sell for many reasons, such as profit, supply and demand. The best reason is probably perceived demand.

We can grumble about Halloween, Christmas in July, untimely hot cross buns, Black Friday, etc, but they're all traders' risks.

Find a better reason for a boycott.
Geoff Clynes, Warragul

Basin in bloom

I'm surprised at the climate extremists complaining about increased rainfall into regions where historically rainfall is negligible. There may be flooding, but that is entirely predictable.

Lake Eyre is, as my old geography teacher would call it, a basin of internal drainage. In other words, falling rain does not flow as water to the sea to be lost, but into Lake Eyre where there is an almost miraculous regeneration of plant and animal life.

I defy any fixated Greenie to tell me that is not a good thing.
Brian Sanaghan, West Preston

Heads out of phones!

Lily van Eeden perfectly highlights the wonders and benefits of spending time in nature ("Go wild – it's good for you", HS, 11/1). Unfortunately, instead of soaking up time in green spaces, the average Australian spends 5½ hours on their phone every day.

The new year seems a good time to reset our priorities and commit to getting outside and reconnecting with nature. Awareness of and engagement with the beautiful world around us, from the smallest insect to the tallest tree, is a balm for the soul.
Amy Miller, Kew

We are all unequal

Now that some school fees have risen above \$50,000 a year, maybe it's time the Macquarie Dictionary reclassified the word "egalitarian" – you know, that old Aussie concept where we had a sense of social equality – as archaic. There's simply no need for it now.
Joan Potter, Dandenong

Taste of legitimacy

I am amused and confused when I read articles that mention Bitcoin and legitimacy ("Bitcoin set to rally with EFTs", HS, 12/1), as this suggests that they were not legitimate previously.

As a baby boomer, I like bricks and mortar investments such as a house, rather than what I think is just a set of numbers which is scarce and therefore valuable.

If the world economy collapses I can grow veggies in my back yard, I wonder what a Bitcoin tastes like?
Dennis Fitzgerald, Box Hill

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Peter Broelman



Our position on slippery words has not changed

Tricky language on the stage 3 tax cuts may have worked for Labor so far, but the word games are now doing Anthony Albanese more harm than good.

The Prime Minister was utterly unconvincing last week when he tried to argue there was ostensibly no difference between saying his position on the tax cuts "has not changed" as opposed to giving a "promise" they would be delivered.

The "our position has not changed" line has been Labor's catch phrase on the tax cuts for almost three years, but it is time to retire the phrase and get real with Australian voters.

"Promise", "guarantee", "confirm" – any of those will do – that stage 3 will come into effect on July 1 this year in full, as currently legislated, or be upfront about what is going to change.

If the cuts are unchanged, Labor has little to lose by reaffirming this with unambiguous language.

With the party languishing in the polls with mid-terms blues fuelled by cost-of-living stresses, promising more take-home pay to the majority of working Australians would put Labor on sounder ground to pursue further relief measures for lower-income earners.

The budget has already factored in the inflationary impact of the cuts, as has the Reserve Bank of Australia, and businesses grappling with labour

Clare Armstrong



shortages are adamant the change will incentivise people to work more. Large portions of Middle Australia missed out on assistance at the last budget.

Energy bill relief went to people on welfare, increased childcare subsidies helped families with young children, and cheaper medicines brought relief for people with chronic illnesses.

But for the many millions of people who fall outside these qualifiers, most have just had a year of much higher living costs, soaring mortgages and decreased buying power in part due to income tax bracket creep.

Stage 3, which means no Australian earning up to \$200,000 a year will pay more than 30 cents in the dollar tax, helps the very people who believe the government overlooked them last time.

But if the PM continues to keep to the current "nothing has changed" script, the seed of doubt and mistrust in the public's mind will continue to eat into Labor's precious remaining political capital.

The uncertainty stems from the time Labor took to decide its position on the cuts in the first place.

The 2021 decision, along with

Labor dumping its poorly received negative gearing changes, was a key moment in Mr Albanese's "small target" strategy to win office.

Though there was not unanimous support in the Labor caucus for stage 3 of the income tax reforms passed in an omnibus bill by the Morrison government, unravelling the proposal was deemed too politically risky, especially from opposition.

From this moment on, whenever asked about the party's support for stage 3, Mr Albanese and his colleagues simply insisted their position had not changed.

Try as it might, the Coalition was unsuccessful in drumming up sufficient fear in the community that this tricky language belied some grand plan to significantly change or even dump the cuts to swing votes.

But with the start date less than six months away, any sign of hesitation from Labor carries more weight.

“The budget has already factored in the inflationary impact of the cuts

Despite increased questions about stage 3 being inevitable in the lead-up to the May budget, the PM struggled to keep his cool when pressed on the issue during a breakfast television interview on ABC.

His dogged refusal to "promise" stage 3 would go ahead as planned this close to the expected start date made Mr Albanese look as though he was trying to hide a larger truth.

Repeatedly saying the position has not changed is no guarantee the cuts are coming. What hasn't changed today could well change tomorrow.

Despite Labor's tricky language, no senior member of the government has made a substantive effort to make a public case against stage 3.

Though a Freedom of Information request lodged by Capital Brief found at least two documents exist that relate to departmental advice sought by Treasurer Jim Chalmers on stage 3 – without the contents (that detail was denied by the government) – there's no smoking gun.

If Labor was serious about reigning in, changing or even delaying stage 3, springing it on the voting public at budget time without having built a decent case is a huge political gamble.

There's little to be gained by sticking to a script purely to avoid speculation there was a past time when Labor might have changed tack.

A simple answer is all we want. Clare Armstrong is national politics editor

We must embrace AI's good

Melissa Wheeler



Emerging technology is often met with fear and panic, based on a misunderstanding of the technology or how it could be creatively used for good.

And, particularly when it comes to AI, humans have an innate and visceral aversion to machines performing human-like tasks.

We make rapid first impressions, or social perceptions, when we meet others, based on how warm they seem and how competent they come across as.

These dimensions form the basis of trust. But when it comes to AI, even if competence is easy to detect, warmth is perceived to be so low that is hard for us to establish trust.

Following the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, we experienced an AI breakout year with new chatbots and generative AI options popping up wherever you looked.

No wonder that educators were concerned about how students would use and misuse such tools in schools and universities.

The initial reaction from many secondary and tertiary institutions was to enforce a ban, introducing policies and penalties for using any generative AI in student assessments.

Instead of shutting it down, what if educators choose to embrace AI in the classroom?

AI is easily accessible, and with so many free options it is unrealistic to think that students (and professionals) will not be looking for ways to reduce effort they put in or boost efficiency.

This semester, my MBA students at RMIT will be required to use ChatGPT in their assessment. They will ask a question and critically evaluate the AI-provided answer.

Also, they will explain their level of human intervention. What prompts did they use to get a more relevant and applicable response? And how did they proofread and manually improve the response by using other sources?

By asking students to embrace and contextualise their use of AI, they will be less likely to hide its use or to claim pasted generative AI output as their own work.

Although plagiarism software is getting better at detecting copied generative AI responses, the chatbot developers are also getting better at creating content that cannot be detected.

The breakout year for AI presented a great challenge for educators but also amazing opportunities for those willing to embrace it.

Dr Melissa Wheeler is senior lecturer in Business Administration at RMIT University

THE BIG ONE

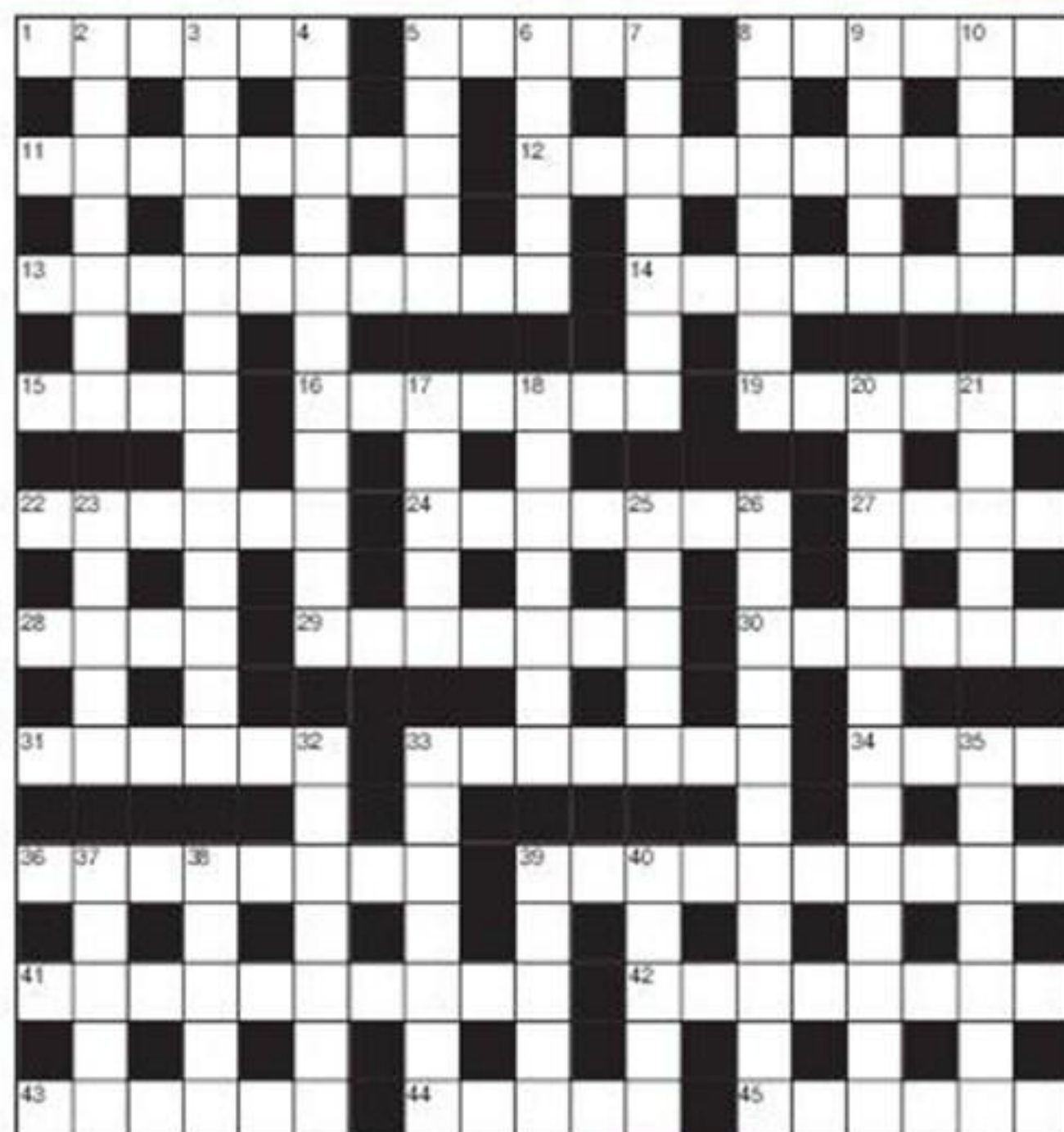
7994

Across

- 1 Layers
5 Vibrations
8 Frailer
11 Quarters
12 Worthwhile
13 Listed off
14 Aid body (3,5)
15 French John
16 Conferred
19 Glaze
22 Hot Japanese condiment
24 Partook of liquor
27 Modify
28 Bangkok language
29 More scrumptious
30 Wound (one's way)
31 Positively!
33 Careless disregard
34 Open
36 Entangles
39 African homed beast
41 Authoritatively
42 Quilt
43 Treatises
44 Probe
45 Female relatives

Down

- 2 Thrash
3 Verbally combative
4 Irregularity
5 Short stay
6 Two-footed creature
7 Thoroughly searched
8 Wannabe (5-2)
9 Awake
10 - Presley



SOLUTION

Across: 10 Trade names, 11 Breviary, 13 King's court, 14 Israel, 15 Overdressed, 18 Kicking, 20 Tassels, 22 Abrasions, 23 Mending, 26 Incenses, 30 Incriminate, 31 Quibble, 34 Spangle, 35 Sentimental, 36 Rained, 38 Listless, 39 Sentimental, 42 Streamline.
Down: 1 Stake out, 2 Saunters, 3 CEOs, 4 Bayonets, 5 Wednesday, 6 One, 7 Mars, 8 Calamitous, 9 Geologists, 12 Dead sea, 15 Shi'ur, 17 Drenching, 19 Catherine, 21 Age, 23 Mainstream, 24 Nectarines, 25 Noises, 27 Eel, 28 Lawsuit, 29 Reinstated, 31 Quivered, 32 Busted in, 33 Enlisted, 37 Exch, 39 Some, 40 Ref.

QUIZMASTER

- 1 Which martial artist teamed up with Chris Tucker in the Rush Hour films?
2 Which element with the symbol Ca is important for bone health?
3 During which year's Winter Olympics was the "Miracle on Ice" played?
4 What are the vast grassy plains of Argentina called?
5 In Spider-Man 3, photographer Eddie Brock is transformed into which supervillain?

- 6 Which 60s dance craze was popularised by Chubby Checker?
7 How many people are depicted in *The Last Supper* painting?
8 Who was the lead singer of the Doors?
9 What soft drink was invented by Dr John Pemberton and originally sold in pharmacies?
10 Which French fashion designer launched the "New Look" clothing line?

10. Christian Dior

JUMBLE

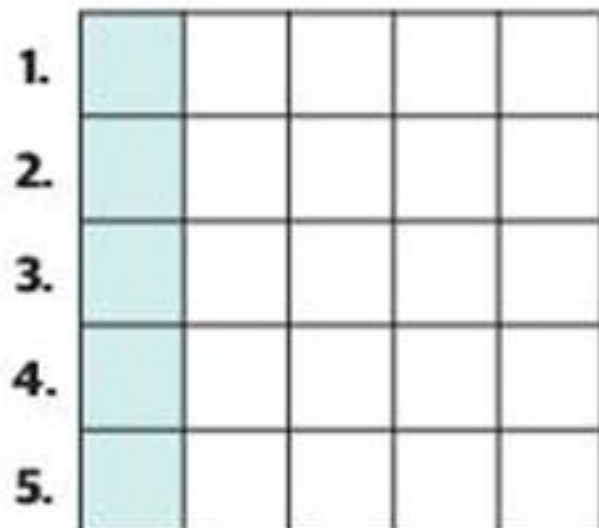
1224

Rearrange the letters in each row to form a word.

Write your answers into the blank grid.

The first letter from each word, reading down, will spell the mystery keyword.

1.	N	D	U	S	F
2.	D	E	A	I	B
3.	W	L	O	L	Y
4.	P	N	T	E	S
5.	E	M	N	E	D



Previous solution: TENTH, ROWER, ACHED, SUEDE, HOPES
Keyword: TRASH

SUDOKU

Fill in all squares so each row, column and each of the nine 3x3 squares contain all digits from one to nine. Solutions, tips and software can be found at sudoku.com.

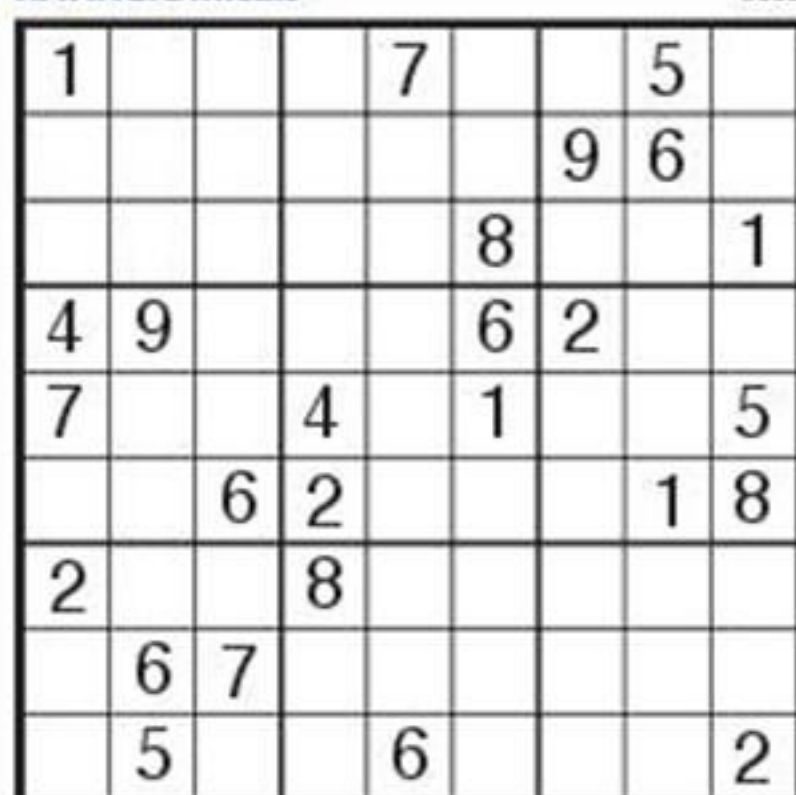
RATING: Very Easy

6551



RATING: Difficult

6552



QUICK ONE

3240

Across

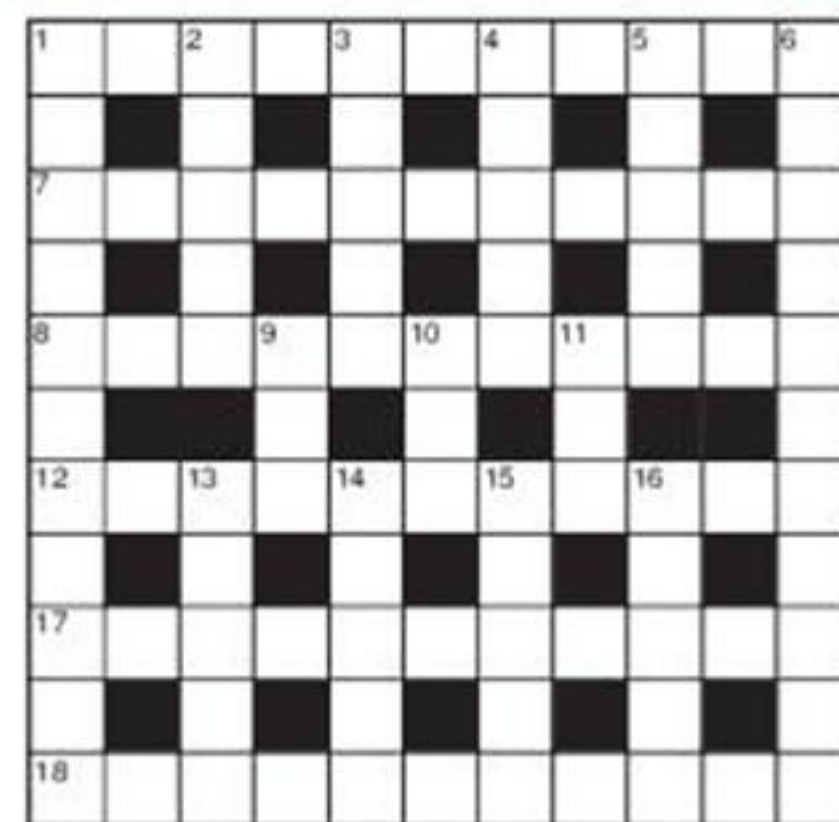
- 1 Combined
7 Mock-ups
8 Calamity
12 Stepped on the gas
17 Headlessness
18 Anxiety

SOLUTION



Down

- 1 Organisation
2 Allow in
3 Swallows noisily
4 Move steadily, - along
5 March
6 Offspring
9 Scottish yes
10 Collar and -
11 Egg cells
13 Table and -
14 Lost hold of (3,2)
15 Olympic flag symbols
16 Offal dish



TWO SPEED

7865

CRYPTIC CLUES

Across

- 1 Relocate sand, please, to form beachfront walks (10)
6 Collects a crew's broadcasts (7)
7 In children, alcohol is affecting the kidneys (5)
9 Saloon loses nothing by becoming a fashionable shop (5)
10 Convert church table, say (5)

- 11 Performer, rolling in money, always leading singer or dancer (5)
12 Al departs Australia for small European country (7)
13 His shy poet formulated theory (10)

Down

- 1 Communicate method of making a fast road (10)

- 2 For no apparent purpose, indicate reduced amount offered by heartless lady (11)
3 Half of ABBA solo with seafood (7)
4 Tsar's equine tossed its riders (11)
5 Finds out if donkey's hanging around? Sure! (10)
8 What rap can do to hostile state (7)

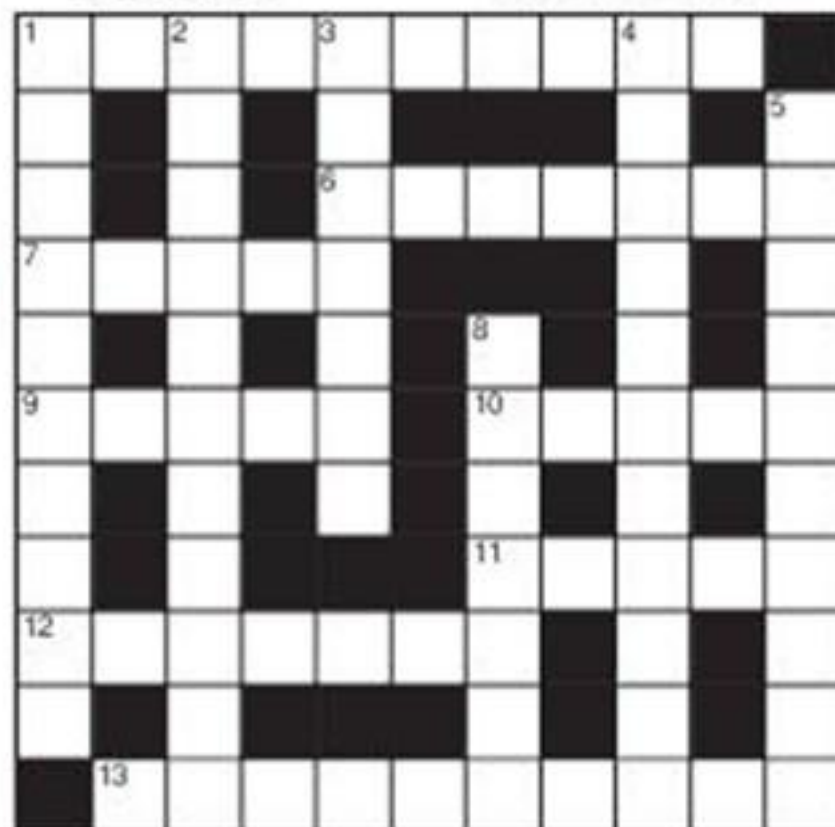
QUICK CLUES

Across

- 1 Waterfront pedestrian precincts (10)
6 Earns (interest) (7)
7 Kidney treatment, - dialysis (5)
9 Wash and perm establishment (5)
10 Change (5)
11 Temperamental star, - donna (5)
12 Home of the strudel (7)
13 Premise (10)

Down

- 1 Freeway (10)
2 Ineffectively (11)
3 Marine mollusc (7)
4 Horsewomen (11)
5 Determines (facts) (10)
8 Angry, on the - (7)

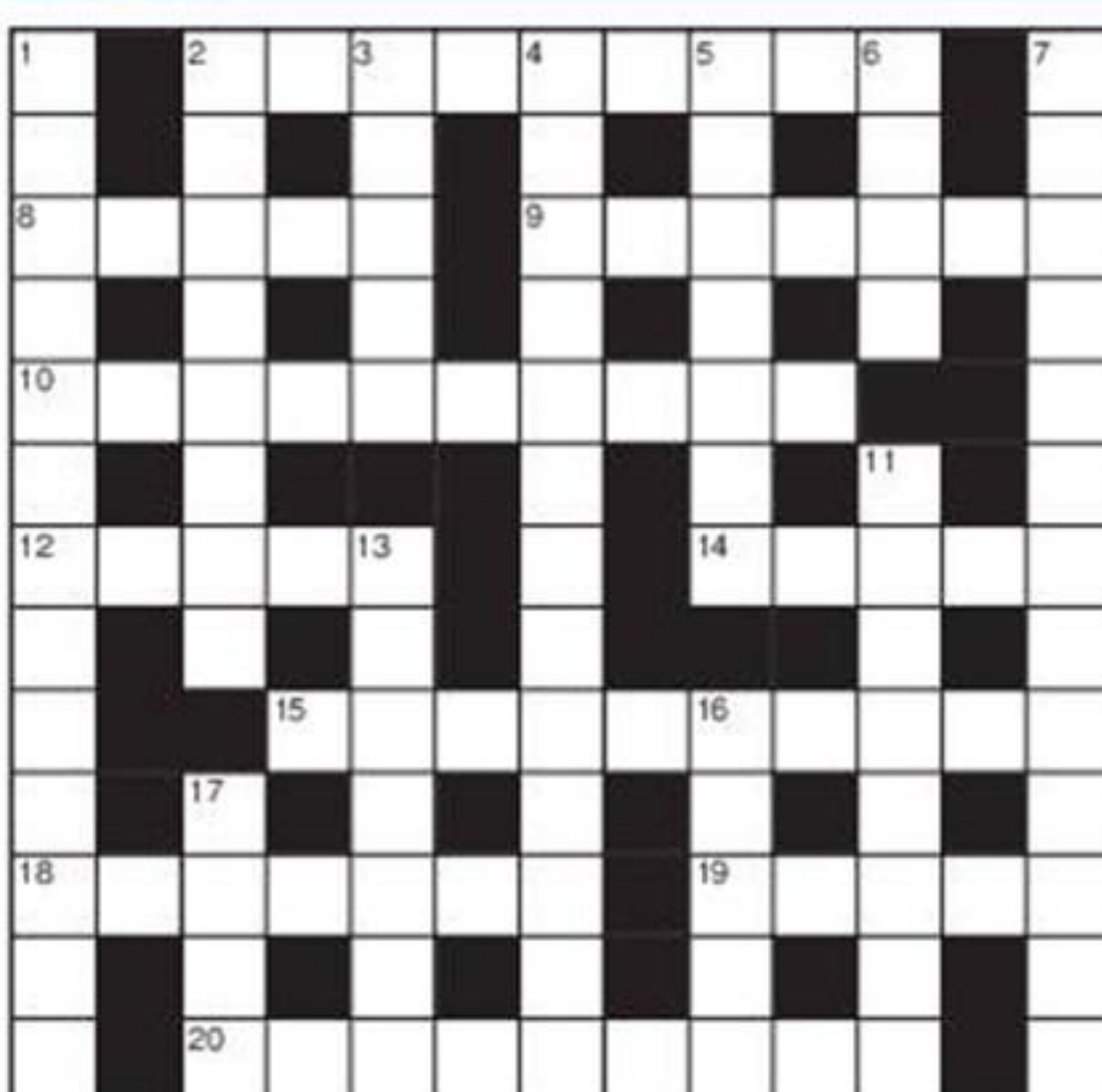


SOLUTION



CRYPTIC

301888



Across

- 2 Worker went to North Pole? No, the other one! (9)
8 We caught Hal the largest creature! (5)
9 To endlessly bleat at ant is very obvious (7)
10 Gene arranged to box Dan before Red could be put at risk (10)
12 She returns nothing to district attorney (5)
14 The French went back and found antelope (5)
15 A stripy pan could be used for decorator's aerosol colouring (5,5)
18 Instilled into a pupil to make them see more clearly (3,4)

- 19 Furry fighters from the crew? Ok, sure! (5)
20 Dad, Hoyle and I, confused, took vacation (9)

Down

- 1 Kiwis, fanaticism and the queen are in the news (3,10)
2 Presenting a drawback - gin cocktail (8)
3 Have a bearing, that is, in tin (3,2)
4 Masseur made an impression and was automatically approved (6-7)
5 High spot in big top (7)
6 Applaud friend coming back after music ends (4)

- 7 Pat's destitute about trials of skill (8,5)
11 Fellow, if elderly, makes engine pipe look diverse (8)
13 Appear to alter large clothing (7)
16 Devout qualities seen in yuppie types (5)
17 Hey! A new way to say yes! (4)

SOLUTION



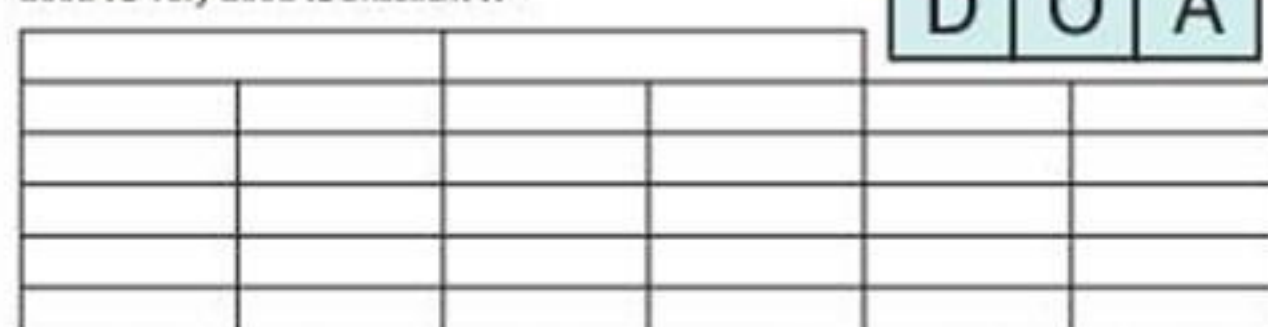
TARGET MASTER

6219

How many words of four letters or more can you make from these nine letters? Each letter may be used only once. The centre letter must be included. No slang, foreign or capitalised words, hyphens, apostrophes, or plurals ending in 's'. Only one form of a verb can be used, e.g. 'ring', but not 'rings' or 'ringed'.

Today's target:

Good 10 Very Good 15 Excellent 17+



Previous solution: Alar, Earl, Elan, Farl, Felt, Flan, Flat, Flea, Lane, Late, Leaf, Lean, Lear, Left, Lent, Rale, Real, Tala, Tale, Teal, Tela, Alate, Alert, Altar, Alter, Artel, Fatal, Feral, Flare, Later, Leant, Leam, Natal, Ratal, Ratel, Renal, Antler, Falter, Lanate, Learnt, Rental.
9-letter word: FRATERAL

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. Enter the letter or letters given in the control grid into the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares. As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check letters off the A to Z list at the bottom as you identify them.

1		2		'		J		4		2		5			7	11
6	3	7	8	9		10	11	3	12	13	14	15			2	15
13		5		3		15		18		17		18			3	18
8	3	19	20	7	15	5		21	15	11	22	13			4	17
15		13		'4				11		5		8			5	16
5	13	6	23		13	2'	24	15	24			1'			6	19
		15		8		5		1		5					7	20
13			6	'2	13	23	1		13	5	'5	13			8	21
22		22		'J				25		15		8			9	22
9	13	5	'5	'6		15	12	13	1	14	'1	8			10	23
13		13		3		16		11		15		10			11	24
1	14	1'	'6	7	12	11		2	5	26	'5	1			12	25
14		12		5		14		1		14		1			13	26

Solution to
the previous
Cochis-Grecks

	I	R	N	E	P	F	E	R	R	O	D	E	N	U	C	D	E	A			
			Q	E			I	D			O	S			W	R					
S	T	H	P	O	U	R	O	D	N		U	C	H	S	E	U	N	L	S	K	
K	W			O	I			Y	G		R	T			M	L			E	I	
I	E	O	M	P	N	S	T			S	D	E	O	L	R	B	L	O	E	T	P
D	N							V	J			R	W							P	T
K	D	E	R	V	A	L	O	A	I	D	N			G	B	S	A	Z	F	E	I
L	E			N	O			C	S			B	J			W	T			R	N
D	E	R	X	I	A	S	N	K	T			O	T	H	P	A	O	L	N	G	S
			D	C				E	I			I	E			L	K				
	T	F	E	O	R	S	T	M	E	I	V	N	A	T	E	L	S	D			

Reveal a completed crossword by deleting one of the two letters in each square

15/1

Can you find all these words in the grid?

ANCESTOR
AUNT
BABY
BROTHER
CLAN
CHILDREN
COUSIN
DAUGHTER
DYNASTY
FAMILY
FATHER
FOREBEAR
GRANDMA
GRANDPA
GRANNY
HEIR
HUSBAND
IN-LAWS
KINFOLK
LINEAGE
MOTHER
NANA
NEPHEW
PARENTS
SIBLING
NIECE
OFFSPRING

B Y Q J Q Y U G S R O T S E C N A C
 U B Y C J L T R I P L E T A W V W H
 B A V T Q I F A T H E R C M D W S I
 W B B W S M N N F X T Z L O A P I L
 S L C U U A T N J M K A A T U N B D
 W I F E N F N Y P Y I S N H G S L R
 E K S I Q I U Y B D N O I E H Y I E
 B N W T R I A Y D O F F Y R T R N N
 I T U L E E E P I Q O O Y Y E U G I
 R G B Q L R L C R L L Z R N R C U V
 T N S R D I S A Q O K S T E A Y L R
 N I H W O O N H T E G R H E B S I S
 E R M U A T H E L I A E S P G E O V
 P P A Q S L H C A P V U N U H W A N
 H S P K X B N E Y G O E C Y M D G R
 E F P J A U A I R P E S T N E R A P
 W F O Q J X B N S G R A N D P A E I
 K O P U G R A N D M A G P K L K B R

PARTNER
POPPA
PROGENY
RELATIVE
SCIONS
SIBLING

SISTER
SON
SPOUSE
TRIBE
TRIPLET
TWIN

UNCLE
WFF

Can you find all the words into the grid?
We've given one to get you started.

ADD
 AGE
 AIR
 AND
 ANT
 ANY
 ARE
 ASS
 ATE
 AWE
 CUR
 DEW
 DOE
 DYE
 ELK
 EMU
 FAT
 GAS
 ICY
 INN
 IRE
 MY
 KIN
 NET
 PIP
 SEA
 SIT
 SKI
 SOT
 SUE

ACTS
APSE
DYED
MIME
NAPE
NEED
ORAL
OSLO
OVUM
OWED
POLE
POPS
RULE
SAGA
SEER
SCORE
SOUL
STAB
TRIO
TWIN

AIDED
 ARISE
 ARRAY
 BAULK
 BEANO

DAISSY
 DOTTED
 ENSUE
 ERASE
 FRANC
 GALES
 ISLET
 LAPEL
 LEDGE
 LYRIC
 MIMIC
 NADIR
 NODDY
 OASIS
 PAINT
 PESOS
 PUREE
 RAMPS
 RESIN
 SCANS
 SKIRL
 SLIDE
 SPADE
 SPRAT
 STEAM
 STINT
 STRAW
 SWAMI
 SWARN

Previous solution

S	C	R	U	B		C	O	A	T	S		M	O	M	B	S
C	H	A	S	E		U	N	T	I	L		I	O	I	O	I
R	I	V	E	R		R	E	T	R		N	E	D	O		
A	L	E		L	O	B		R	E	L	A		G	E	L	
P	E	R	S	I	A		C	A	L	I		C	E	D	E	
						E	N	F	O	R	C	E		E	G	O
F	L	A	M		M	A	T	S			G	S	C	A	N	
R	I	B		I	R	E	N		S	A	B		S	A	G	I
E	M	O	T	I	O	N				M	I	S	S	I	L	E
I	T	I	O		I	N	E	S		S		L	U	N	E	
S	T	I	E	R	N		A	L	A	S		M	O	W	S	
						E	V	E		D	I	L	E	Z	Z	A
C	O	S	S		B	R	I	N	K		O	U	L	E	T	
E	R	A			O	B	E	S	E		P	O	I		E	R
D	A	T	E		S	T	A	K	E		A	L	G	A	E	
A	T	O	N			T	I	G	E	R		N	O	I	S	E
R	E	N	D	S		S	C	E	N	T						

Previous solution

	O	M	I	T		S	T	E	E	P	L	Y
C	R	H			U	N						
S	T	A	M	I	N	A	V	E	T			C
	R	S		L	E		R	U	M	B	A	
N	E	I	G	H			A	O	R			
A	Z	A	L	E			I	G	N	I	T	E
		T	U	N		G	E					
P	U	S		E		A	N	N	E	D		W
S	O	R		R							I	
Y	E	A	R			R	A	M	P	A	N	T
C	P	L	A		E	E	H					
H	A	B	I	T	A	T		L	O	G	E	D
E	O	Y		O		T		N	E	R	V	E
	X					S						S

T	L	C	S	O	C	H	M	G	H	B	O	H	G	E
M	O	O	N	S	H	I	N	E	R	Z	P	J	X	W
Z	C	I	I	H	A	N	U	O	A	M	P	E	R	E
S	K	I	P	Z	R	I	G	H	T	F	O	B	U	H
F	E	Y	Q	L	I	C	G	V	I	S	S	U	N	Y
G	R	O	P	E	S	D	E	M	O	T	I	O	N	S
O	M	H	E	N	M	N	T	Y	E	L	T	X	E	V
S	S	O	R	G	A	N	Z	R	A	P	I	E	R	C
T	A	R	S	J	W	X	D	H	M	S	O	W	S	G
A	D	R	I	F	T	C	Y	B	P	E	N	N	E	D
E	U	F	S	D	A	P	N	I	L	M	H	O	V	K
V	L	N	T	S	U	N	A	M	I	Q	B	Y	E	S
E	A	I	E	W	G	L	M	A	F	E	U	H	L	K
S	T	E	N	C	H	E	O	D	Y	S	S	E	Y	G
I	E	A	T	U	T	V	S	M	F	F	Y	B	N	E

We have removed all the black squares from this crossword grid and replaced them with letters. Can you black out the surplus letters to reveal a finished crossword?

Fill in the missing letter to make an eight-letter word which can read either clockwise or anticlockwise

Previous solution:
ORIMON



Insert the missing letters to make ten words — five across the grid and five down. More than one solution may be possible.

	P		R	
S		G		R
	R		P	
I		L		S
	E		D	

9=6

	S	K	I	
A	T	O	N	E
R	E	A	D	Y
M	E	L	E	E
	L	A	X	

Words search

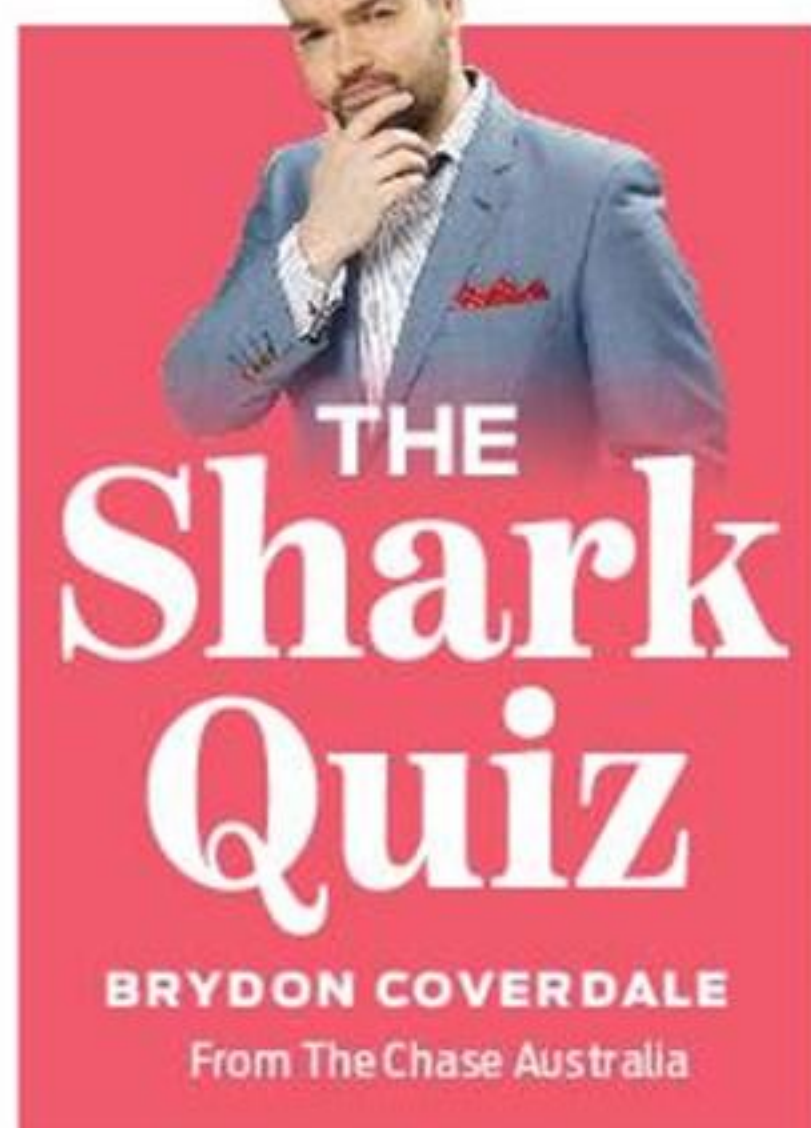
M B L A E R E H T E U A V I D E B Y K A M T B
R L A N T E R N Y E L W O R D L O N E A L R A
E S H O C K I N G E L Z Z U P A I D E M E I A
V G L E X N I J H B I N E H R E O T E E Y L B
O L R F I A U L A M Y A T S G C U P H I R B L
L E A F M B W V M O D E O Z H H A H I A T H
N N E I A T A F B E R J V Q E J A N C I Z N T
I C P C X P R Y G A N L I D U R I R K A E I N
A O E I O F R A A M W E B R E W L B I J A X
R E H E F O I N G T O T W R R H I A I N T S U
L Z T N T I O O F I O R E N T E K P G O H O D
J L D T C A R B I N E S D S H A D O W K I N G

Lyrical

60s: Down on the Corner, Creedence Clearwater Revival
70s: Kung Fu Fighting, Carl Douglas
80s: I'll Say Goodbye, The Exponents
90s: U Can't Touch This, MC Hammer
00s: Are You Gonna be my Girl, Jet
10s: Sign of the Times, Harry Styles

5x5

D	E	P	O	T
A	L	I	V	E
T	O	N	E	D
U	P	E	N	D
M	E	S	S	Y



1. Cirrus and cumulus are types of what?
2. What word beginning with A is another term for fishing with rod and reel?
3. Which Australian prime minister initiated a gun buyback scheme?
4. In maths, LCD stands for "lowest common..." what?
5. Which film features a famous scene of Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze at a pottery wheel?
6. What is the common three-word name for the long expanse of mountains and ranges that stretches from Cape York Peninsula to Victoria?
7. What vegetable gives borscht soup its distinctive colour?



SCORES UNDER 10: KEEP AT IT 10-17: YOU'VE GOT THE SMARTS 18-20: WATCH OUT BRYDON THERE'S COMPETITION

8. Played by Brad Garrett, what is the name of Ray's police officer brother in the sitcom *Everybody Loves Raymond*?
9. If something is described as "recherché", is it rare or commonplace?
10. Billionaire tech entrepreneur Elon Musk was born in what country?
11. Which team won the AFL's wooden spoon in 2023?
12. How many stars appear on the Torres Strait Islander Flag?

13. What was revolutionary Che Guevara's real first name: Alberto, Ernesto or Joaquin?
14. What is both a traffic signal that allows cars to go, and the title of a 2017 hit song by Lorde?
15. Which classic Australian novel tells the story of two families, called the Lambs and the Pickles, who share a house in Perth in the 1940s?
16. On this day in 1967, which team based in Wisconsin won the first ever Super Bowl?

17. Which ABC TV show that was first broadcast in 1961 and is still on air today is the longest-running show in Australian television history?
18. The Caribbean island of Hispaniola is shared by Haiti and which other country?
19. Sir John Forrest was the first premier of which Australian state?

THE STUMPER

20. Which four Australians have won women's golf major titles?

Answers: 1. Clouds 2. Angling 3. John Howard 4. Denominator 5. Ghost 6. Great Dividing Range 7. Beetroot 8. Robert B. Robert 9. Rare 10. South Africa 11. West Coast 12. One 13. Ernesto 14. Green Light 15. Cloudstreet 16. Green Bay Packers 17. Four Corners 18. Dominican Republic 19. Western Australia 20. Jan Stephenson, Karrie Webb, Minjee Lee, Hannah Green

Stars

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With Mercury (Ideas) now moving through Capricorn, it's an opportunity to find solutions to recently identified problems. And in our media driven world, it's worth remembering that the best answers aren't always found by an online search. As the tech industry showcases its latest developments at the start of the CES trade show, expect to see innovative advances in the world of AI and automations. But nothing beats human heart-to-heart communication. And that's what the cosmos encourages today.

ARIES MAR 21 - APR 20

No matter which direction you turn, or how much you achieve, you're facing more and more demands on your time. It's hard to keep track of the promises and commitments you need to honour (let alone find the energy to invest in looking after your own life and relationships). How are you meant to know what to prioritise when you've got wrongs to right and people's needs to look after? Today brings a chance to simplify things. Something can be dropped from your to-do list. Let go of that, and you'll be able to move ahead. Solve problems. Ease troubles. Find solutions. For free audio and video forecasts visit ozfree.cainer.com

TAURUS APR 21 - MAY 21

Although a positive attitude can get you a long way, even the most optimistic person in the world is going to find some things impossible. With the best will in the world, in some situations, certain goals are simply unattainable. I'm not mentioning this to dishearten you. Quite the opposite. It's just that past disappointments might tempt you to underestimate the possibility now being presented to you. You really can be confident today. Although there's no guarantee of success, know that the odds are stacked in your favour. Great news awaits. For free audio and video forecasts visit ozfree.cainer.com

GEMINI MAY 22 - JUN 22

We're going to test your mind reading skills. If you take a moment to close your eyes and relax, can you tell what the rest of your prediction is going to say? Of course you can't. There's no way you can know unless you read it. In fact, your forecast is going to tell you that you need to open your eyes and take a good look at an issue you'd prefer to ignore. Your ruler, Mercury, in earthy Capricorn, brings the courage and the clarity to see the path you need to follow to bring success your way. You need to focus on your needs today. To find out how your life could change for the better, check out your free forecasts. Visit ozfree.cainer.com

CANCER JUN 23 - JUL 23

I was recently watching a documentary about parrots. Their ability to imitate made me think about how humans share that skill. We copy words, people and ideas. Sometimes, when we try out different ways of being, or different viewpoints, we sound as if we don't know what's going on. Then, we learn from other folk's reactions, and adapt. Mimicry is part of our developmental process. Yet there are times when we appear to be communicating, but the words and actions are devoid of real meaning. Watch out for that today. What does your heart desire and can you achieve it? For free audio and video forecasts visit ozfree.cainer.com

LEO JUL 24 - AUG 23

When we're caught up in a confusing situation it's hard to envisage the ideal way to resolve it. But are you so embroiled in a need to avoid a particular issue (or relationship) that you'll settle for anything that seems better than it is right now? Yes, there are times when we have to shrug our shoulders, and deal with whatever life brings our way. But the current cosmic climate is offering you options. Don't lose sight of your standards today. Despite the uncertainty you're experiencing, you're close to attaining a significant goal. View your challenges in a new light. For free audio and video forecasts visit ozfree.cainer.com

VIRGO AUG 24 - SEP 23

Everything about life seems circular. The moon circles around our planet. Our planet circles around the sun. And the sun rotates around its axis. And our minds seem to follow this same pattern. The cogs keep turning, and activating more cogs, which keep spinning. Your mind has been in a whirl recently. With so much going on, it's no wonder you're feeling a bit dizzy. Today, with your ruler, Mercury, settling into Capricorn, something starts making sense. You'll find that once that happens, you'll regain a sense of balance. Will the dream you're chasing come true? Find out. For free audio and video forecasts visit ozfree.cainer.com

LIBRA SEP 24 - OCT 23

Although you can see a logical way to get to where you want to go, it doesn't look very enticing. Either it's going to be more expensive than you can afford. Or it involves crossing a particularly challenging terrain. You're hesitating, in the hope of discovering an alternative route. Yet, in your heart of hearts, you know it's going to be impossible to find one. So, your best option is to seek assistance. There are people around who can help smooth the way ahead. Explaining your needs takes courage. But the results will be worth it. For great advice to guide you to a brighter future, visit ozfree.cainer.com

SCORPIO OCT 24 - NOV 22

Imagine how you'd respond if everything started falling apart? Or how you'd manage if life only presented you with challenges, awkward people and impossible scenarios? If you want to picture a never-ending litany of worst-case scenarios, no-one's going to stop you. But I'm hoping you see how preposterous that notion is. Life on planet Earth might be crazy and unpredictable. But don't let your imagination take you down that unhelpful path. Instead, focus on how you can cope with an improvement. One is heading your way. Live life to the max. Check out your free audio and video forecasts. Visit ozfree.cainer.com

SAGITTARIUS NOV 23 - DEC 21

It doesn't matter how convincingly someone explains something, we only hear what we want to hear and believe what we want to believe. And even if something is staring us in the face, we only see what we want to see. And since we tend to be much better at talking than listening, it's no wonder there's so much misunderstanding and miscommunication. Which means we learn to expect disharmony, even when we share common ground. Don't distrust the opportunity coming your way. You might not understand it now. But you will. Change is possible. For free audio and video forecasts visit ozfree.cainer.com

CAPRICORN DEC 22 - JAN 20

If we scratch beneath any surface, we find something waiting to be uncovered. Even a simple, random remark can be hiding emotions. If you're going to make the decision you need to make right now, there are certain issues to be taken into consideration. Otherwise, you might let your expectations inform your judgement and jump to the wrong conclusion. With Mercury (intellect) in your sign, you can carefully weigh up all the factors and come to a decision that has a powerfully positive effect on your future wellbeing. You've got so much to look forward to. Check out your free audio and video forecasts. Visit ozfree.cainer.com

AQUARIUS JAN 21 - FEB 19

Think back to when you were at school. Every new term brought harder lessons to learn. Even though those days might be long over, we're all still students at the school of life; and a new year brings a different set of challenges. It doesn't seem to get any easier. As soon as we've got to grips with something, something else pops up. And if we don't learn the lesson, it re-presents itself, in a different format, until we do. With Mercury in a new sector of the sky, you've got the ability to look at an old problem and deal with it perfectly. Nothing is hopeless. If you want news, check out your free audio and video forecasts. Visit ozfree.cainer.com

PISCES FEB 20 - MAR 20

As a chess-lover, I'm delighted by the resurgence in its popularity. With all the apps and online games, it's become accessible to anyone who likes pushing their strategic thinking to new levels. Yet satisfying though this kind of gameplay can be, it's only useful in certain scenarios. You're dealing with a situation that suits your emotional intelligence. And with Mercury (intellect) now in earthy Capricorn, your sensitivity, kindness and generosity are more effective than ever. Don't underestimate your strengths today. What's in the sky? Helpful planetary alignments. For free forecasts visit ozfree.cainer.com

6.00 Morning Programs. **11.00** Vienna: Empire, Dynasty And Dream. (PG, R)
12.10 BBC News At Ten. **12.30** ABC World News Tonight With David Muir.
1.00 PBS News Weekend. **1.30** Al Jazeera News Second Edition. **2.05** Tony Robinson: WWII By Drone. (Max, R)
3.00 Mastermind Australia. (R) **3.30** The Cook Up With Adam Liew. (R) **4.00** The Supertet. **5.00** Motor Racing.

6.00 Mastermind Australia. (R)
6.30 SBS World News.
7.30 Jonathan Ross' Myths And
Legends: Wales. (PG)
8.25 Isle Of Wight: Jewel Of
The South.
9.20 The Secret Life Of Lighthouses
Muckle Flugga. (PG, R)
10.15 SBS World News Late.
10.45 Blanca. (MA15+)a
11.45 Reyka. (MA15+)a R

12.45 *Rykyk* (MAIS+av, R) (South Africa)
3.40 *Going Places*, (R) **4.40** *Barnay* (R)
 (Australia) **5.00** *NHK World English News*
Morning, (Japan) **5.30** *ANC Philippines*
The World Tonight, (Philippines)

SBS VLND (CH31)

6.00 Morning Programs. **2.15** Planet A. (PG) **3.05** Most Expensive. (PG) **3.35** 89C News At Ten. **3.55** ABC World News Tonight With David Muir. **4.20** ABC America This Week. **5.15** PBS News Weekend. **5.45** Joy Of Painting. **6.35** The Fast History Of (PG) **6.40** Jeopardy! **7.30** News. **7.35** 8 Out Of 10 Cats (M) **8.30** Taskmaster (M) **9.25** Two Weeks To Live. **10.25** Scrubs. (PG) **11.25** Hoarders. (M) **1.05** Late Programs.

SBS MOVIES (CH32)

6.00 Steel Magnolias (PG) (1989) **8.10**
The 400 Blows (PG) (1959, French) **10.00**
Motherhood (M) (2018) **11.35** Operation
Minceast (M) (2020) **2.00** Mr. Holmes
(PG) (2019) **3.55** Asterix: The Missions
Of The Gods (PG) (2014, French) **5.30**
Sunflower (M) (1997Q, Italy) **7.30** Those
Happy Years (M) (2013) **9.30** Gotti (MAIS-
(2018) John Travolta) **11.35** The Best Offer
(M) (2013) **2.00** Late Programs:

sky news

6.00 First Edition; **9.00** AM Agenda; **11.00** NewsDay; **2.00** Afternoon Agenda; **4.30** Business Now With Ross Greenwood; **5.00** The Kenny Report; **6.00** Peta Credlin; **7.00** The Bolt Report; **8.00** Sharni; **9.00** Paul Murray Live; **10.00** The Late Debate; **10.30** The Late Debate: The Papers; **11.00** NewsNight; **1.00** Sky News UK LIVE; **5.30** First Edition

Colour in Your Life. (PG) **4.30** Paintings Come
much 44. (M) **8.30** The Backup Plan. (PG) **9.00**
0 Cella Door. (NZ) (M) **1.00** Late Programs.

50

SATURDAY
Mostly sunny

*24 hours to 9am yesterday

MELBOURNE TODAY

Partly cloudy. Medium chance of showers in the northeast suburbs, slight chance elsewhere. The chance of a thunderstorm in the afternoon and evening. Winds east to southeasterly 25 to 35 km/h.

TOMORROW

Partly cloudy. Medium chance of showers, most likely in the afternoon and evening. The chance of a thunderstorm.

30 DAY
MELBOURNE **25**

Sun protection recommended
9:20am to 5:30pm
MAX UV Index 10 (very high)

6.00 Morning Programs. **8.00** Cricket. Third Test Review: Australia v Pakistan. **10.20** Cricket. New Zealand Super Smash. Northern Brave v Wellington Blaze. **1.50** Cricket. New Zealand Super Smash. Northern Brave v Wellington Firebirds. **6.45** **84** The Bash! **7.15** Cricket. Big Bash League. Melbourne Stars v Hobart Hurricanes. **8.45** The Big Break. **9.00** Cricket. Big Bash League. Melbourne Stars v Hobart Hurricanes. **10.30** Big Bash Post Game. **10.45** Cricket. Twenty20 International Series. India v Afghanistan. Game 2. **12.05** Late Programs.

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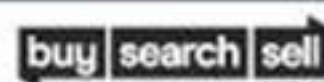
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Public Notices

PROPOSAL TO INSTALL A NEW TELSTRA MOBILE PHONE BASE STATION AT WARRANDYTE NORTH

- The proposed facility at the Growlers Hill Reservoir, 16-18A and 16-18B Blooms Road, Warrandyte North 3113, is to comprise the swap out of redundant Ausnet equipment on the Amplitel (former SP Ausnet) 40m monopole including a headframe, (5) panel antennas (1380mm L), two parabolic dish antennas (1 x 1200mm and 1 x 800mm diameter) and associated equipment, with new Telstra mobile equipment comprising a new triangular headframe, nine (9) panel antennas (5 x 2533mm L and 3 x 717mm L), one (1) dipole omnidirectional antenna (3500mm L), ancillary equipment, and associated earthworks for the underground fibre-route leading to the existing Telstra equipment shelter located nearby.
- Telstra regards the proposed installation as a Low-impact Facility under the Telecommunications (Low-impact Facilities) Determination 2008 ("The Determination"), Schedule Facilities and Areas, Part 1, Items 4 and 5; Part 8, Item 2; and Part 3, 3.1 Item 4. Consultation is being undertaken in accordance with Section 5 of C5642020 Mobile Phone Base Station Deployment Code.
- The proposed infrastructure will comply with the ACMA EME regulatory arrangements. An EME Report and further information can be obtained from www.rfma.com.au/3113005.
- We invite you to make comments on the proposal by the **13th February 2024**. Please provide comments to Planning Consultant (on behalf of Amplitel and Telstra), Servicestream, PO Box 14570, Melbourne VIC 8001, via email: planning.vic@servicestream.com.au, or phone: 039837 6555.

Service Stream Ltd A.B.N. 46 072 369 870
Telstra Ltd A.C.N. 085 174 788
Amplitel Pty Ltd A.C.N. 648 133 073

ROAD CLOSURE
EXTENSION - FRANCIS STREET, YARRAVILLE

As part of Phase 2 drainage works associated with the upgrade of Francis Street in Yarraville, notice is hereby given that the westbound lanes of Francis Street between the intersections of Urwin Street and Gent Street will continue to be closed until the end of March 2024. As per prior arrangements the lane closures will reduce traffic on Francis Street to one lane in each direction at these intersections. When the lane closure is in operation, vehicles will only be allowed to do a left-in and left-out from the adjoining Urwin Street, Angliss Street, Ballard Street and Roberts Street. Road users are advised that alternative routes will be available via Steele Street and Gent Street at this time.

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Costa Georgiadis

SUN 4 FEB 2024 | 10am-4pm
Geelong Football Club
GMHBA Stadium

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PRE-REGISTER



RACE RESULTS

GALLOPS

Sale

Daily Double: races 6 and 8: Magic Dram (2) - Miss Keeler (5) \$34.40. Subs: 4.11.

Early Quaddie: races 1,2,3,4: (7) (4) (2) (13): \$1,737.90. Subs: 5.4, NSR, 4.

Quaddie: races 5,6,7,8: (9) (2) (7) (5): \$728.40. Subs: 9.4, 11.

Race 1: 7 5 10. Win \$5.60 place \$1.80 \$1.04 \$2.60. Q: \$3.90. E: \$10.90. Duets: 7-5: \$2.10, 7-10: \$6.30, 5-10: \$3.40. T: \$56.80. First 4: 7-5-10-3: \$179.30. Sub: 5. Scr: 2,6,12,13,14,15,17,18,11(8).

Race 2: 4 3 9. Win \$2.00 place \$1.30 \$2.10 \$2.60. Q: \$5.90. E: \$10.90. Duets: 4-3: \$2.90, 4-9: \$10.40, 3-9: \$25.50. T: \$127.50. D: \$10.80. First 4: 4-3-9-1: \$67.60. Sub: 4. Scr: 6,13(1).

Race 3: 2 10 8. Win \$10.90 place \$3.50 \$6.00 \$4.90. Q: \$118.40. E: \$232.40. Duets: 2-10: \$33.10, 2-8: \$31.60, 10-8: \$78.40. T: \$2,430.70. D: \$29.60. First 4: 2-10-8-14: \$25,399.80. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 4: 13 4 2. Win \$11.30 place \$2.05 \$1.04 \$7.20. Q: \$4.10. E: \$17.10. Duets: 13-4: \$1.90, 13-2: \$20.70, 4-2: \$8.40. T: \$314.20. D: \$152.90. First 4: 13-4-2-7: \$3,853.30. Sub: 4. Scr: 3,6,8,11,10(8).

Race 5: 9 6 2. Win \$3.70 place \$1.70 \$2.50 \$2.10. Q: \$16.10. E: \$29.80. Duets: 9-6: \$7.20, 9-2: \$6.20, 6-2: \$12.00. T: \$173.80. D: \$16.40. First 4: 9-6-2-7: \$97.30. Sub: 9. Scr: 1,10.

Race 6: 2 7 4. Win \$4.00 place \$1.60 \$7.30 \$1.20. Q: \$117.50. E: \$132.70. Duets: 2-7: \$4.70, 2-4: \$1.90, 7-4: \$17.50. T: \$464.80. D: \$33.00. First 4: 2-7-4-10: \$7,321.30. Sub: 4. Scr: 1,11.

Race 7: 7 5 13. Win \$3.00 place \$1.30 \$2.70 \$3.80. Q: \$17.10. E: \$20.20. Duets: 7-5: \$5.60, 7-13: \$27.20, 5-13: \$27.20. T: \$272.60. D: \$17.30. First 4: 7-5-13-4: \$1,329.60. Sub: 7. Scr: 6,8,10,14.

Race 8: 5 17. Win \$5.50 place \$1.80 \$2.80 \$2.60. Q: \$27.20. E: \$48.40. Duets: 5-17: \$7.00, 5-7: \$17.50, 1-7: \$12.60. T: \$315.70. D: \$21.10. First 4: 5-1-7-6: \$1,930.30. Sub: 11. Scr: 4,9,10,12.

Wodonga

Daily Double: races 5 and 7: Missed Victory (3) - Monday Miss (12) \$137.10. Subs: NSR, 8.

Early Quaddie: races 1,2,3,4: (2) (10) (2) (2): \$244.40. Subs: 5.10, 2.1.

Quaddie: races 4,5,6,7: (2) (3) (1) (12): \$19,952.80. Subs: 1, NSR, 8,8.

Race 1: 2 3 5. Win \$7.40 place \$2.50 \$13.60 \$1.80. Q: \$26.60. E: \$420.70. Duets: 2-3: \$15.40, 2-5: \$5.50, 3-5: \$64.30. T: \$2,214.90. First 4: 2-3-5-15: \$12,268.20. Sub: 5. Scr: 1,10,11,16.

Race 2: 10 4 13. Win \$1.70 place \$1.04 \$1.20 \$1.10. Q: \$1.60. E: \$3.00. Duets: 10-4: \$1.10, 10-13: \$18.90, 4-13: \$18.70. T: \$61.90. First 4: 10-4-13-7: \$206.90. Sub: 10. Scr: 6,8,11,12.

Race 3: 2 8 12. Win \$2.10 place \$1.50 \$3.50 \$2.50. Q: \$52.80. E: \$73.40. Duets: 2-8: \$17.60, 2-12: \$32.00, 8-12: \$463.30. T: \$2,696.70. D: \$7.10. First 4: 2-8-12-6: \$18,308.20. Sub: 2. Scr: 1,13.

Race 4: 2 3 7. Win \$5.90 place \$1.90 \$3.50 \$2.60. Q: \$42.00. E: \$67.60. Duets: 2-3: \$10.90, 2-7: \$7.90, 3-7: \$11.60. T: \$449.90. D: \$10.10. First 4: 2-3-7-10: \$5,152.10. Sub: 1. Scr: 5,8.

Race 5: 3 4 1. Win \$23.70 place \$4.60 \$2.10 \$2.10. Q: \$35.60. E: \$77.50. Duets: 3-4: \$12.20, 3-1: \$15.70, 4-1: \$6.60. T: \$258.20. D: \$113.40. First 4: 3-4-1-7: \$10,838.40. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 6: 3 4 12. Win \$45.90 place \$1.50 \$2.90 \$8.10. Q: \$97.10. E: \$289.00. Duets: 3-4: \$22.80, 3-12: \$121.20, 4-12: \$40.00. T: \$5,326.20. D: \$1,306.80. First 4: 3-4-12-11: \$25,359.20. Sub: 8. Scr: 6,9,15,16.

Race 7: 12 9 2. Win \$5.40 place \$2.30 \$2.60 \$4.80. Q: \$18.20. E: \$29.80. Duets: 12-9: \$6.60, 12-2: \$9.70, 9-2: \$26.90. T: \$344.20. D: \$365.70. First 4: 12-9-2-1: \$2,166.50. Sub: 8. Scr: 5,6,7,11,13.

HARNESS

Hamilton

Daily Double: races 5 and 7: Keayang Chucky (9) - Fides (10) \$8.30. Subs: NSR, 10.

Early Quaddie: races 1,2,3,4: (6) (6) (7) (7): \$345.40. Subs: 10, NSR, NSR, 1.

Quaddie: races 5,6,7,8: (9) (3) (10) (8): \$468.70. Subs: NSR, NSR, 10, 4.

Race 1: 6 4 8. Win \$8.20 place \$2.00 \$1.90 \$1.90. Q: \$19.90. E: \$38.70. Duets: 6-4: \$8.90, 6-8: \$7.10, 4-8: \$5.20. T: \$174.40. First 4: 6-4-8-7: \$833.60. Sub: 10. Scr: 9.

Race 2: 6 4 11. Win \$6.10 place \$2.50 \$2.90 \$2.70. Q: \$30.80. E: \$49.30. Duets: 6-4: \$7.80, 6-11: \$11.20, 4-11: \$17.50. T: \$479.60. D: \$64.80. First 4: 6-4-11-1: \$3,244.10. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 3: 4 10 8. Win \$5.00 place \$2.30 \$2.40 \$1.40. Q: \$39.50. E: \$55.70. Duets: 4-10: \$20.10, 4-8: \$11.40, 10-8: \$1.98. T: \$198.30. D: \$4.50. First 4: 4-10-8-1: \$54.60. Sub: 1. Scr: 5.

Race 4: 7 4 1. Win \$5.00 place \$2.30 \$2.40 \$1.40. Q: \$39.50. E: \$55.70. Duets: 7-4: \$20.10, 7-1: \$3.10, 4-1: \$6.10. T: \$198.30. D: \$4.50. First 4: 7-4-1-3: \$54.60. Sub: 1. Scr: 5.

Race 5: 9 3 10. Win \$2.70 place \$1.04 \$2.00 \$1.40. Q: \$5.90. E: \$11.20. Duets: 9-3: \$2.30, 9-10: \$2.70, 3-10: \$3.10. T: \$28.90. D: \$13.10. First 4: 9-3-10-1: \$186.80. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 6: 3 1 8. Win \$3.70 place \$1.90 \$1.90 \$2.30. Q: \$6.20. E: \$15.90. Duets: 3-1: \$6.10, 3-8: \$6.10, 1-8: \$11.30. T: \$72.30. D: \$11.40. First 4: 3-1-8-5: \$482.10. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 7: 10 13 8. Win \$2.10 place \$1.40 \$2.10 \$1.80. Q: \$11.50. E: \$16.90. Duets: 10-13: \$4.20, 10-8: \$11.10, 13-8: \$23.60. T: \$102.70. D: \$11.60. First 4: 10-13-8-11: \$464.00. Sub: 10. Scr: 5.

Race 8: 8 3 7. Win \$2.00 place \$2.60 \$6.80 \$1.90. Q: \$417.20. E: \$227.80. Duets: 8-3: \$9.60, 8-7: \$12.20, 3-7: \$36.50. T: \$1,089.60. D: \$30.10. First 4: 8-3-7-4: \$7,318.70. Sub: 4. Scr: 1.

GREYHOUNDS

Sandown Park

Daily Double: races 6 and 8: Perfect Blend (2) - Like Wild fire (1) \$14.90. Subs: 8.1.

Early Quaddie: races 1,2,3,4: (7) (8) (1) (12): \$747.10. Subs: 4.3, 1,2.

Quaddie: races 5,6,7,8: (1) (2) (7) (13): \$306.50. Subs: 1, NSR, 1.

Race 1: 7 4 8. Win \$8.90 place \$2.10 \$1.40 \$1.40. Q: \$57.70. E: \$27.40. Duets: 7-4: \$7.40, 7-8: \$12.20, 4-8: \$7.10. T: \$90.50. First 4: 7-4-8-1: \$54.50. Sub: 4. Scr: 3,6.

Race 2: 8 4 3. Win \$9.70 place \$4.50 \$3.80 \$2.70. Q: \$50.30. E: \$71.60. Duets: 8-4: \$6.70, 8-3: \$12.20, 4-3: \$1.13. T: \$138.70. Sub: 1. Scr: 5.

Race 3: 1 2 7. Win \$1.80 place \$1.70 \$4.00 \$1.40. Q: \$42.00. E: \$10.30. T: \$33.30. D: \$41.80. First 4: 1-2-7-4: \$101.70. Sub: 1. Scr: 3,6.

Race 4: 2 7 3. Win \$1.70 place \$1.20 \$1.60 \$1.20. Q: \$30.00. E: \$4.00. T: \$61.60. D: \$3.50. First 4: 2-7-3-8: \$175.30. Sub: 2. Scr: 5.

Race 5: 1 3 8. Win \$2.00 place \$1.40 \$1.10 \$1.10. Q: \$1.20. E: \$3.60. T: \$15.30. D: \$7.30. First 4: 1-3-8-4: \$76.70. Sub: 1. Scr: 7,5(1).

Race 6: 2 1 8. Win \$6.50 place \$2.70 \$2.80 \$1.70. Q: \$11.50. E: \$44.50. T: \$100.30. D: \$31.10. First 4: 2-1-8-3: \$1,057.60. Sub: 8. Scr: 4.

Race 7: 7 6 1. Win \$8.50 place \$2.80 \$1.70 \$1.10. Q: \$29.40. E: \$56.20. Duets: 7-6: \$5.50, 7-1: \$8.20, 6-1: \$8.00. T: \$329.60. D: \$78.80. First 4: 7-6-1-5: \$2,059.50. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 8: 1 2 5. Win \$1.10 place \$1.04 \$1.40 \$1.30. Q: \$3.50. E: \$4.00. Duets: 1-2: \$1.80, 1-5: \$1.60, 2-5: \$5.00. T: \$10.20. D: \$11.70. First 4: 1-2-5-6: \$36.00. Sub: 1. Scr: 9,3(1).

Race 9: 4 6 3. Win \$3.80 place \$1.80 \$9.60 \$1.70. Q: \$52.20. E: \$60.80. T: \$274.00. D: \$9.90. First 4: 4-6-3-7: \$568.10. Sub: 7. Scr: 2(1).

Race 10: 3 4 6. Win \$6.50 place \$2.00 \$2.50 \$2.60. Q: \$9.10. E: \$28.50. Duets: 3-4: \$3.70, 3-6: \$10.30, 4-6: \$8.60. T: \$183.60. D: \$17.10. First 4: 3-4-6-7: \$676.20. Sub: 4. Scr: 2(1).

Race 11: 8 2 1. Win \$14.30 place \$3.80 \$1.50 \$1.70. Q: \$8.90. E: \$36.80. Duets: 8-2: \$13.10, 8-1: \$8.00, 2-1: \$2.90. T: \$167.70. D: \$71.10. First 4: 8-2-1-3: \$525.90. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 12: 1 7 4. Win \$4.20 place \$1.20 \$1.20 \$2.10. Q: \$14.30. E: \$12.30. Duets: 1-7: \$5.30, 1-4: \$2.80, 7-4: \$3.40. T: \$76.30. D: \$14.50. First 4: 1-7-4-2: \$461.30. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Sale

Daily Double: races 6 and 8: Mighty Moose (7) - Early Boy (7) \$75.50. Subs: 1.4.

Early Quaddie: races 1,2,3,4: (2) (8) (7) (13): \$361.50. Subs: NSR, NSR, 6, NSR.

Quaddie: races 5,6,7,8: (2) (7) (6) (7): \$204.30. Subs: 2.1, 6,4.

Race 1: 2 3 7. Win \$14.10 place \$3.20 \$2.30 \$2.70. Q: \$48.30. E: \$103.70. Duets: 2-3: \$15.10, 2-7: \$12.20, 3-7: \$11.80. T: \$994.70. D: \$78.90. First 4: 2-3-7-1: \$4,255.50. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 2: 8 5 4. Win \$4.20 place \$1.90 \$2.70 \$2.60. Q: \$20.40. E: \$22.70. Duets: 8-5: \$6.70, 8-4: \$4.30, 5-4: \$9.50. T: \$107.40. D: \$78.90. First 4: 8-5-4-7: \$760.90. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 3: 7 5 2. Win \$3.80 place \$1.20 \$1.90 \$2.60. Q: \$6.70. E: \$11.50. T: \$133.20. D: \$26.90. First 4: 7-5-2-6: \$250.10. Sub: 6. Scr: 8.

Race 4: 1 7 3. Win \$2.50 place \$1.30 \$1.20 \$7.60. Q: \$2.60. E: \$5.20. Duets: 1-7: \$1.80, 1-3: \$7.50, 7-3: \$7.10. T: \$74.60. D: \$19.30. First 4: 1-7-3-8: \$155.20. Sub: NSR. All Started.

Race 5: 2 8 7. Win \$1.60 place \$1.04 \$5.10 \$4.40. Q: \$9.80. E: \$10.10. Duets: 2-8: \$3.80, 2-7: \$7.40, 8-7: \$41.70. T: \$111.10. D: \$6.20. First 4: 2-8-7-1: \$335.00. Sub: 2. Scr: 9,10.

Race 6: 7 8 1. Win \$15.60 place \$4.30 \$3.40 \$1.04. Q: \$25.40. E: \$147.30. Duets: 7-8: \$8.30, 7-1: \$5.10, 8-1: \$4.40. T: \$192.10. D: \$15.80. First 4: 7-8-1-5: \$1,688.80. Sub: 1. Scr: 3,6.

Race 7: 6 8 4. Win \$1.90 place \$1.80 \$3.50 \$1.40. Q: \$10.90. E: \$8.10. T: \$118.50. D: \$24.80. First 4: 6-8-4-3: \$533.20. Sub: 6. Scr: 5.

Race 8: 7 1 2. Win \$5.40 place \$2.10 \$3.20 \$2.20. Q: \$17.20. E: \$38.60. Duets: 7-1: \$1.80, 7-2: \$6.30, 1-2: \$9.10. T: \$165.00. D: \$9.90. First 4: 7-1-2-4: \$428.10. Sub: 4. Scr: 9,10.

Race 9: 3 2 5. Win \$19.10 place \$2.90 \$1.40 \$7.40. Q: \$25.80. E: \$83.50. Duets: 3-2: \$9.40, 3-5: \$19.40, 2-5: \$15.40. T: \$1,158.60. D: \$63.10. First 4: 3-2-5-1: \$2,879.50. Sub: 7. Scr: 9.

Race 10: 4 6 7. Win \$1.80 place \$1.04 \$5.10 \$1.90. Q: \$13.10. E: \$13.60. Duets: 4-6: \$2.70, 4-7: \$1.90, 6-7: \$20.00. T: \$111.60. D: \$23.00. First 4: 4-6-7-8: \$286.50. Sub: 4. Scr: 9,10.

SPORT DETAILS

TENNIS

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Day 1 at Melbourne Park

(prefix denotes seeding)

Men's Singles Round 1

Jaume Munar (ESP) d Alexander Shevchenko (RUS) 6-3 6-3 6-1

Matteo Arnaldi (ITA) d Adam Walton (AUS) 7-6(5) 6-2 6-4

4-Jannik Sinner (ITA) d Botin van de Zandschulp (NED) 6-4 7-5 6-3

Fabian Marozsan (HUN) d Marin Cilic (CRO) 6-1 2-6 6-2 7-5

2-Francisco Cerundolo (ARG) d Dane Sweeny (AUS) 3-6 6-3 6-4 2-6 6-2

Panel Kotov (RUS) d Arthur Rinderknech (FRA) 7-5 6-1 6-7(5) 6-7(5) 6-3

Tomás Machac (CZE) d Shintaro Mochizuki (JPN) 7-5 6-1 7-5

5-Andrey Rublev (RUS) d Thiago Seyboth Wild (BRA) 7-5 6-4 3-6 4-6 7-6(6)

26-Sebastian Baez (ARG) d J.J. Wolf (USA) 3-6 6-2 6-3 3-0 net

Jasper de Jong (NED) d Pedro Cachin (CAN) 6-2 6-3 6-4

Christopher O'Connell (AUS) d Cristian Garin (CHI) 3-6 7-5 4-6 6-1 7-5

Women's Singles Round 1

Alycia Parks (USA) d Daria Snigar (UKR) 2-6 6-2 6-4

9-Baibora Krejciikova (CZE) d Mai Hontama (JPN) 2-6 6-4 6-3

28-Lesia Tsurenko (UKR) d Lucia Bronzetti (ITA) 3-6 7-5 6-3

Kamilla Rakhimova (RUS) d Emma Bedats (USA) 6-4 6-4

Tamara Korpatsch (GER) d Jodie Burrage (GBR) 2-6 6-3 6-0

32-Leylah Fernandez (CAN) d Sara Belic (CZE) 7-6(5) 6-2

Elena Avanesyan (RUS) d Bai Zhuosuan (CHN) 4-6 7-5 6-2

Maria Timofeeva (RUS) d Alice Corret (FRA) 6-2 6-4

8-Maria Sakhar (GRE) d Nao Hibi (JPN) 6-4 6-1

Branda Fruhvirtova (CZE) d Ana Bogdan (ROU) 2-6 6-4 6-3

Amanda Anisimova (USA) d 13-Judelmia Samsonova (RUS) 6-3 6-4

Dane Parr (FRA) d 30-Wang Xinyu (CHN) 6-3 2-6 6-3

Caroline Dolehide (USA) d Lucia Jeanjean (FRA) 6-2 6-4

Alina Korneeva (RUS) d Sara Sorribes Tormo (ESP) 4-6 6-3 6-2

NEWCASTLE JETS 2 (S Bolden 63, T Yilop 77) d BRISBANE ROAR 1 (M Carbin 65) at Leichhardt Oval.

SYDNEY FC 1 (C Vine 70) d WESTERN UNITED 0 at Allianz Stadium. Referee: Casey Lisa Reibelt.

WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS 1 (H Caspers 67) d MELBOURNE CITY 0 at CommBank Stadium.

Standings

Melb City 12 8 2 2 28 18 10 26

Perth Glory 12 6 3 3 17 13 4 21

Sydney FC 11 5 4 2 12 7 5 19

Western Sydney 11 5 2 4 15 12 3 17

Western United 12 5 2 5 17 18 1 17

Newcastle Jets 12 5 2 5 20 22 1 17

Wellington 12 5 1 6 17 14 3 16

Melb Victory 12 4 3 5 18 17 1 15

Central Coast 11 4 3 4 12 12 0 15

Brisbane Roar 12 3 4 5 15 21 6 13

Carderra United 11 2 4 5 23 25 2 10

Adelaide United 12 2 2 8 14 29 15 8

ASIAN CUP

Group B: Australia 2 (Irvine 51, Bas 74) India 0, Uzbekistan 0 Syria 0

Sarah Gigante can't believe it as she crosses the finish line first to win the Women's Tour Down Under on Sunday. Picture: Getty Images

One Gigante leap for woman kind

An ecstatic Sarah Gigante won the battle up Willunga Hill on Sunday, to claim the Women's Tour Down Under.

The 23-year-old Melbourne launched a solo attack with 2km left, winning the race to the summit by 20 seconds, from 19-year-old Dutch rider Nienke Vinke and Deakin's Neve Bradbury.

Overnight leader Cecilie Uttrup Ludwig dropped to ninth overall, after losing

more than a minute on Gigante, who holds the Strava record for Willunga and is a two-time national time trial champion.

Gigante said she had lost her way since the 2021 Olympics and said her switch to AG Insurance-Soudal from Movistar in the off-season had paid dividends.

"I can't even begin to tell you much that means after (winning) the last one here

three years ago. It felt like everything went wrong since then in so many ways," Gigante told Cycling News.

"To come back full circle and with my new team... it's so special."

"I'm just so happy to get a win. It's pretty tough when you're only 23 and lots of people think you're washed-up, and sometimes I did too."

"It was just so hard to keep believing in myself, but I did."



GIGA KICK IN TEETH

Injury puts rematch on backburner

Ben Dorries

Clayton Douglas says the Giga Kick camp is "dying for a rematch" with star mare Imperatriz, but revealed his champion sprinter had so far been unable to return to trackwork with his "strange injury".

The 2022 Everest winner was meant to be back in work by now, but Douglas said he remained confined to light walking exercises on the treadmill.

A crucial medical scan in the next couple of weeks will determine the immediate racing future of the freak sprinter, who suffered an injury when finishing third behind Imperatriz in a controversial run that derailed Giga Kick's 2023 spring.

"He's on the treadmill, he's only doing light work until we get his next scan," Douglas said on Sunday.

"We were hoping the initial scan was going to be OK and

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he could resume trackwork, but the injury hadn't quite healed like we would have liked. We are in a holding pattern at the moment. We are on the back foot so far."

Douglas said it was possible Giga Kick could miss the entire autumn carnival, then return for the Brisbane winter to springboard into a spring tilt that would include an Everest mission.

But he is still not ruling out the autumn carnival, even though he knows Giga Kick is in a race against time with a

deep-seated muscle injury to his hindquarters.

"We are dying for a rematch with Imperatriz at some point," Douglas said.

"But it is possible the scans could come back and Giga Kick still won't quite be ready."

"If we were having this discussion in two or three weeks time, we would definitely know what we are doing."

"But I am sitting on the fence at the moment. It's an injury that we can't physically see. He's injured muscle off his third trochanter bone, which is a strange and unique injury."

"We are just hoping that his next scan is fine and he can resume training at the start of February."

Douglas said the medical advice was that the injury would not stop Giga Kick returning to his brilliant best, and it was simply a case of giving the crack sprinter time to heal.

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DUBBO TODAY

TAB CODE: SR

DD 5 & 7 EQ 1, 2, 3, 4 TREBLE 5, 6, 7 QUADDIE 4, 5, 6, 7

FOXTEL 526 & 528

THE DETAILS

RAIL: True. TRACK: Soft (5)
TAB FIXED ODDS ALL RACES

1 1.50 COCA COLA NO SUGAR PLATE EQ1

1100m. \$27000. C.H.G. Maiden SW. Apprentices can claim.

FORM	HORSE (BARRIER)	JOCKEY	WGT	RTG	ODDS
1	4 CALMUNDI (7)	W.A. Stanley (a1.5)	59	75	81.00
2	3333 CANNY PROSPECT (5) (b)	N. Heywood	59	100	1.80
3	25489 LUSKIN VAIN (8)	Ms C. Ings	59	87	21.00
4	6 PLATINUM WARRIOR (2) (h)	Ms S. Inglese (a1.5)	59	84	12.00
5	2 BYRON'S FARM (5)	B. Nock (a1.5)	57.5	77	21.00
6	2 CHEAP GAS (1)	J. Pacey-Holmes	57.5	90	3.60
7	75723 HE'S ALL STYLED (3) (h)	C. Gallagher	57.5	95	3.60
8	6 PARTYGATE (4)	Scratched	57.5	-	-

CANNY PROSPECT 1, He's All Styled 2, Cheap Gas 3, Calmundi 4

2 2.25 BARASTOC RACE N WIN PLATE EQ2

1100m. \$27000. F.M. Maiden SW. Apprentices can claim.

FORM	HORSE (BARRIER)	JOCKEY	WGT	RTG	ODDS
1	05695 CAMP COVE (4) (h)	M. Stapledon (a1)	58	91	19.00
2	05089 KERNIE GAIL (8)	K. Dunbar	58	78	101.00
3	85520 PAINTITE (7)	A. Cavallo	58	87	11.00
4	04204 SALLISTA (3)	Scratched	58	88	16.00
5	68533 TAKEN FOR GRANTED (11)	Scratched	58	-	-
6	4752 CHOICE WITNESS (5) (b)	C. Viller (a2)	56.5	100	1.65
7	9 DERVINA (12) (h)	R. Simpson (a)	56.5	81	18.00
8	DON'T TELL TARA (1) (h)	Ms K. Bell-Pitman	56.5	79	21.00
9	0 FLASH DANDINO (10) (h)	M. Heagney	56.5	78	101.00
10	6059 FLYING NINA (2)	M.A. Cahill	56.5	78	31.00
11	GRAND OYSTER (9) (h)	Ms A. Cooper (a1)	56.5	85	7.50
12	VERENDY (6)	B. Nock (a1.5)	56.5	94	5.50

SALLISTA 1, Choice Witness 2, Verendy 3, Paintite 4

3 3.00 DESSPOS SOLUTIONS EQ3

1400m. \$30,000. Maiden. Apprentices can claim.

FORM	HORSE (BARRIER)	JOCKEY	WGT	RTG	ODDS
1	24652 MEDINAH (2) (b)	R. Simpson (a)	59	97	2.60
2	0057 TAKE IT ON THE RUN (1) (h)	R. Simpson (a)	56.5	76	81.00
3	36825 DALANTE (11) (h)	M. Heagney	55.5	90	41.00
4	6 DANCES WITH HOVES (4) (b)	M.A. Cahill	55.5	94	4.00
5	85455 FREEWHEELER (1)	C. Viller (a2)	55.5	98	5.00
6	95507 LAISVAS (12) (h)	M. Stapledon (a1)	55.5	87	21.00
7	74 MISSION MUMMABAR (3) (h)	C. Gallagher	55.5	91	10.00
8	04724 SENSEI JACKIE (7) (h)	J. Pacey-Holmes	55.5	97	13.00
9	6680 SWEET BREEZE (5) (h)	Ms K. Bell-Pitman	55.5	73	151.00
10	54573 THE GIT UP (6)	B. Nock (a1.5)	55.5	100	10.00
11	116988 THE PERCENTAGE (8)	R. Rogers	55.5	83	81.00
12	3743 UNDER ACHIEVER (NZ) (1)	A. Cavallo	55.5	94	10.00

MEDINAH 1, Freewheeler 2, The Git Up 3, Dances With Hoves 4

4 3.40 MAASMEPLATE EQ4 Q1

1600m. \$27000. Class 1 Maiden SW. Apprentices can claim.

FORM	HORSE (BARRIER)	JOCKEY	WGT	RTG	ODDS
1	46067 AUSSIE PHAROAH (3) (dhw)	B. Looker	59	90	41.00
2	55624 GIRRAGULANG (5)	Ms C. Hillier (a1.5)	59	89	26.00
3	46534 HALLOWED STAR (14) (h)	R. Simpson (a)	59	100	4.00
4	35137 I AM CONVINCING (4) (w)	M. Stapledon (a1)	59	90	13.00
5	45324 KARAOKE KING (12) (whb)	Scratched	59	96	9.50
6	51599 SHADOW SHOT (3)	C. Gallagher	59	81	61.00
7	67015 SNITCHIN SNATCHING (13) (b)	S. Lisany	59	91	21.00
8	14758 ZOUCAN TOUCAN (11)	B. Nock (a1.5)	59	86	51.00
9	46216 THORNGATE (7) (hb)	M.A. Cahill	57.5	97	3.80
10	3410 DHYANI (NZ) (10) (d)	J. Barrie (a2)	57	97	19.00
11	8664 THUNDERBOLTER (9)	N. Heywood	56.5	88	21.00
12	74461 ERELLE (2)	C. Viller (a2)	55.5	93	3.40
13	39366 BIRN BULL (1) (h)	Ms G. McDonald	55.5	95	15.00
14	09 TWENTY FOUR GUNS (NZ) (6)	Scratched	55	79	81.00

ERELLE 1, Hallowed Star 2, Snitchin Snatching 3, Karaoke King 4

5 4.20 MEDLEY REFRIGERATION & A.C. DD1 Q2

1100m. \$27000. Class 1 Apprentices can claim.

FORM	HORSE (BARRIER)	JOCKEY	WGT	RTG	ODDS
1	89524 DESTINY'S BOUNTY (5) (w)	W.A. Stanley (a1.5)	61.5	88	12.00
2	215 EAGLEDE (18) (dhw)	C. Gallagher	59	87	3.90
3	195 ZAP YAH (13) (dhw)	Ms Z. Hunt (a3)	58	85	9.50
4	72415 PLENTITUDE (9) (dhw)	R. Simpson (a)	57.5	96	4.80
5	156 DANCEDES (5)	N. Heywood	56.5	88	6.50
6	28174 FANTASY CROWNED (1) (h)	Ms K. Bell-Pitman	56.5	87	34.00
7	56217 SOUTH BULLAWAY (17) (h)	B. Looker	56.5	91	10.00
8	03275 SPEUDOSA (7) (tw)	Ms W. Peel	56.5	94	81.00
9	93330 CUMMINGS (8) (dw)	B. Nock (a1.5)	56	87	13.00
10	170 WASTED DAYS (3) (h)	J. Pacey-Holmes	56	81	12.00
11	29855 PAHANG (1) (wh)	Ms G. McDonald	55.5	91	81.00
12	57189 INVEST IN LOVE (15) (dhw)	M. Stapledon (a1)	55	82	31.00
13	131556 CHELSEA AMANDA (16) (dhw)	Scratched	55	-	-
14	36051 MONAZEL (11) (tw)	C. Viller (a2)	55	100	11.00

EMERGENCIES

FORM	HORSE (BARRIER)	JOCKEY	WGT	RTG	ODDS
15	4969 BARCOO RIVER (4)	A. Cavallo	55	81	26.00
16	0368 LADY FRAULEIN (2) (h)	Ms Z. Hunt (a3)	55	78	34.00
17	00664 PIXIE'S CHOICE (19)	Scratched	55	86	81.00
18	5095 SEASONAL SPIRIT (14) (wh)	Scratched	55	69	126.00
19	0074 SMART 'N' FITZY (12)	Scratched	55	80	126.00

MONAZEL 1, Plenitude 2, South Bullaway 3, Speudosa 4

6 5.00 BARASTOC SUMMER SPRINT SERIES Q3

1000m. \$27000. Benchmark 58 Heat. Apprentices can claim.

FORM	HORSE (BARRIER)	JOCKEY	WGT	RTG	ODDS
1	22105 KEEP ON GOING (1) (wh)	Ms S. Inglese (a2)	63	90	6.50
2	42778 MY ODETTE (NZ) (9) (wh)	Ms Z. Hunt (a3)	60.5	92	11.00
3	51133 APOLLO STAR (7) (dhw)	B. Nock (a1.5)	60	91	4.80
4	33246 MIDNIGHT DREAM (10) (dhw)	C. Gallagher	60	87	7.50
5	17365 SIN CITY BELLE (3) (dhw)	C. Viller (a2)	59.5	82	19.00
6	351 DEVINE CHOPS (2) (dhw)	R. Simpson (a)	59	90	2.40
7	70308 TELLS TAILS (6) (dhw)	B. Looker	58.5	81	26.00
8	95455 SIMPLY BETTER (4) (dw)	J. Pacey-Holmes	56.5	92	9.00
9	010166 JARMANAGIC (5) (dhw)	Ms C. Hillier (a1.5)	55.5	87	81.00
10	111313 TWYBORN AFFAIR (11)	Ms W. Peel	55.5	91	23.00
11	57005 ZARZOU (12) (w)	A. Cavallo	55	79	151.00

KEEP ON GOING 1, Devine Chops 2, Tells Tails 3, Apollo Star 4

KEEP ON GOING (Stephen Edwards) 5G By Am Invinible - Mamwazel (173-4-2). First up finished 5-14 len 13th of 14 (6) \$1000 55.0 Stormy Witness 1400m Rosehill 3yo+ Hwy (C) Good (4) Sep 9. Resuming. 2kg damer engaged. Placed in Benchmark 58 company at first up last campaign. Front running. Races well on this track. Well placed from the perfect draw. Back to country level. Take beating.

MY ODETTE (C. Lundholm) 6M By Rock 'N' Pop - She's Swan Lake (NZ) (29-4-4-2). Balanced up midfield when 3 len 8th of 10 (9) \$1000 61.0 5th Magnifica 1000m Orange (Bm58) Soft (5) Dec 28. Wasn't all that far away at Orange at latest. Place preferred.

APOLLO STAR (Brett Thompson) 4G By Great Choice - Little Betty (9-2-0-3). Raced wide without cover when 1 len 12 len 3rd of 9 (7) \$250 62.5 Snowdrop 1000m Dubbo (Bm50) Soft (5) Dec 23. Freshened. No much for winner but kept on for thirteenth pool here at latest. Can play a role.

MIDNIGHT DREAM (Paul Clisby) 4M By Your Song - Dreamlike (22-2-5-2). Took up a midfield position when 3 len 6th of 12 (6) \$900 60.5 Gyronet 1200m Mudgee (Bm58) Soft (7) Dec 1. Back from a let up. Wasn't all that far away at Mudgee at latest. Normally races well at the distance. Tough aley. One for multiples.

SIN CITY BELLE (C. Lundholm) 6M By Casino Prince - Sinequanum (174-3-2).

Keen when 2-14 len 6th of 13 (5) \$800 57.0 Laffing Waters 800m Dubbo (Bm58) Good (4) Sep 10. First up Has raced well this track previously. In the mix. **DEVINE CHOPS** (C. Lundholm) 3G By Invader - Our Tomraccoon (2-1-0-1). Resumed with 3 len win of 11 (3) \$1955.85 Devine Chops 1000m Orange Mdn Hcp Soft (5) Dec 28. Led and kept on to score convincingly this level at Orange first up. Fitter. Ideally drawn. Can play akey role.

TELLS TAILS (C. Lundholm) 7M By Zoffany (IRE) - Rebel Gem (427-3-6). Over-raced early, middle stages when 4 len 8th of 9 (5) \$380 60.5 Snowdrop 1000m Dubbo (Bm50) Soft (5) Dec 23. Freshened. Average effort this level here at latest. Effective this track distance. Worth some thought.

BLACKHILL KITTY (Connie Greig) 6M By Ready For Victory - Bad Kitty (35-5-2-6). Raced three wide when 6-17 len 10th of 11 (1) \$440 65.0 Inzaghi 1400m Coonamble R/C Champ Soft (5) Oct 8. Resuming. Fresh stats don't flatter. Looking to others.

SIMPLY BETTER (David J. Smith) 4M By Better Than Ready - Sweet As (19-3-1-1). Best grinding 3 len 5th of 10 (6) \$1400 57.0 5th Magnifica 1000m Orange (Bm58) Soft (5) Dec 28. Far from disgraced at Orange last time out. Worth some thought.

JARMANAGIC (G.D. Lunn) 8G By Starspangledbanner - Rosemont Flyer (74-8-6-6). Reasonable effort 13 len 6th of 8 (8) \$8100 55.0 Beauchamp 1000m Glandra Open (Bm50) Good (4) Jan 2. Seasoned campaigner. Battled on fairly at Glandra last start. Place hope.

TWYBORN AFFAIR (C.W. Hodgson) 6G By Real Sapp - Aspidistra (11-2-12). Setled midfield when 3-14 len 3rd of 12 (5) \$590 59.5 The Big Seal 800m Glandra (Bm50) Good (4) Aug 5. Resuming. Drawn poorly. First out of this. **ZARZOU** (R.W. Howe) 7G By Zoustar - Arinosa (3-3-2-2). Not up finished 6-3-14 len 11th of 12 (6) \$2100 59.0 Serene Shadow 1000m Mudgee (Bm50) Good (3) Sep 30. First up Needs look from out there. Apprentices tested.

7 5.40 BARASTOC FURLONG DD2 Q4

1400m. \$30,000. Benchmark 58 Heat. Apprentices can claim.

FORM	HORSE (BARRIER)	JOCKEY	WGT	RTG	ODDS
1	16669 CELTIC HARP (5) (dhw)	M. Stapledon (a1)	63	84	10.00
2	14609 THE MEDIATOR (15) (dhw)	W.A. Stanley (a1.5)	62.5	90	19.00
3	05756 DREAM GAME (9) (w)	Ms S. Inglese (a2)	61	86	10.00
4	22039 RINGSIDE (5) (d)	J. Pacey-Holmes	61	93	17.00
5	97070 TUPOU (4) (wh)	R. Simpson (a)	60	84	19.00
6	55581 ONHATA CRUMPT (16) (h)	A. Banks	59.5	99	10.00
7	15601 PANTS ON FIRE (18) (dhw)	Ms C. Hillier (a1.5)	59.5	92	7.50
8	77505 ADELSON (2) (dw)	N. Heywood	59	94	3.80
9	04504 RIVER ROCKET (19) (wh)	B. Nock (a1.5)	59	89	19.00
10	1072783 WITNESS COLLECTOR (10) (dhw)	M. Heagney	58.5	91	23.00
11	1162463 LINDEN TREE (8) (dhw)	B. Looker	57.5	100	19.00
12	66586 MARYLAND BRIDGE (1) (wh)	C. Gallagher	57	87	13.00
13	51552 DIVINE RENDEZVOUS (13) (w)	C. Viller (a2)	56.5	90	8.00
14	24356 KALPANA (12) (wh)	Ms G. McDonald	55	100	11.00

EMERGENCIES

FORM	HORSE (BARRIER)	JOCKEY	WGT	RTG	ODDS
15	74613 DUNDAS (7)	Scratched	57	-	-
16	82595 SEARCHLIGHT (17) (dw)	Scratched	57	90	61.00
17	37958 JASIRI (14) (h)	Scratched	55	84	126.00
18	50557 OLLIVANDER (11) (tw)	Scratched	55	89	34.00
19	60765 COSTAS (NZ) (3) (wh)	Scratched	55	88	61.00

ADELSON 1, Pants On Fire 2, River Rocket 3, Kalpana 4

CELTIC HARP (Connie Greig) 5G By No Nay Never (USA) - Lagerphone (30-5-1-1). Hampered at start when 2 len 6th of 11 (0) \$3100 59.5 Driving Force 1000m Coonamble (Bm56) Good (3) Dec 17. Beaten but not disgraced when 5 len 9th of 9 (7) \$4100 54.0 Sea Of Flames 1600m Glandra Open (Bm80) Good (4) Jan 7. Place hope.

THE MEDIATOR (A. M. Molloy) 6G By Sebring - Dream 'r Believe (274-1-2). Hampered at start when 3 len 10th of 11 (4) \$4100 60.0 Driving Force 1000m Coonamble (Bm56) Good (3) Dec 17. Best grinding 5 len 9th of 11 (5) \$200 59.5 Dream Game 1400m Glandra (Bm50) Good (4) Jan 1. Prior effort.

DREAM GAME (C.W. Hodgson) 5G By Dream Ahead (USA) - It's Game On (12-1-4). Balanced up midfield when 2 len 5th of 11 (2) \$3100 58.0 Driving Force 1400m Coonamble (Bm56) Good (3) Dec 17. Positioned midfield when 3 len 6th of 12 (1) \$2100 59.0 Nanna 1200m Glandra Hcp (C2) Good (4) Jan 2. Far effort without threatening at Glandra at latest. One for multiples.

RINGSIDE (Nelly Smith) 8G By Stratum - Mother's Milk (NZ) (69-9-11-7). Kept fighting when 1 len 3rd of 10 (1) \$1500 58.5 Leica Stars 1400m Coonamble (Bm58) Good (3) Dec 17. Dwelt at start 2 len 9th of 11 (5) \$1300 55.0 Casual Lane 1400m Inverell Intercl (Bm56) Heavy (10) Jan 1. Couldn't show a turn of foot in the wet in similar race at Inverell last time out. One for multiples.

TUPOU (C. Lundholm) 6G By Real Impact (PH) - Kokomo (35-6-2-3). Kept grinding 7-14 len 7th of 10 (8) \$4100 59.0 Leica Stars 1400m Coonamble (Bm58) Good (3) Dec 17. Far effort in 4 len 11th of 12 (10) \$2600 61.0 Precious Socks 1000m Glandra (Bm58) Good (4) Jan 7. Looked tested here.

ONHATA CRUMPT (M. Chad Denison) 7M By Albrecht - Modest Marie (37-4-6-3). Kept trying 5 len 8th of 8 (6) \$900 58.5 Laffing Waters 1300m Dubbo (Bm58) Good (4) Nov 4. Rounded up opposition to score 3rd win of 12 (1) \$3100 57.5 Onhata Crumpt 1300m Narramore (Bm58) Good (3) Dec 5. Freshened. Good, determined win from off the pace at long odds last outing. Has come up with a horror draw. Not out of the.

PANTS ON FIRE (D. Lunn) 8M By Kuroshio - Fall In Love (16-3-1-3). Drifted back near 400m when 11 len 12th of 12 (5) \$700 58.5 Cyclone Rupert 1200m Mudgee (Bm58) Soft (7) Dec 1. Began awkwardly. Raced three wide when 1 len win of 11 (6) \$850 60.5 Pants On Fire 1200m Dubbo (Bm50) Soft (5) Dec 23. Freshened. Impressive win here last start. 15kg damer engaged. Up in distance now. Take beating.

ADELSON (Cameron Crockett) 5M By Adelaide (IRE) - Ready On Sunday (16-3-1-0). Positioned midfield when 5 len 10th of 10 (2) \$2500 56.0 Craven 1000m Score (Bm60) Good (4) Dec 19. Eased nearest when 1 len 5th of 12 (0) \$500 59.5 Sabuli 1400m Tamworth (Bm58) Soft (8) Jan 8. On a quick back up. Gave a good sight at Tamworth at latest. Drawn to receive every chance. Has damers.

RIVER ROCKET (Ms. C. Monaghan) 7G By Hidden Dragon - Royal Yangtze (58-6-7-3). Keen when 10 len 12th of 12 (5) \$3100 60.0 Owtara Crumpt 1000m Narramore (Bm58) Good (3) Dec 5. Balanced up midfield when 3 len 4th of 12 (8) \$2100 61.5 Inzaghi 1400m Glandra (Bm50) Good (3) Dec 30. Went all that far away at Glandra last start. Needs look from out there. One for ewots.

WITNESS COLLECTOR (M. J. Lunn) 7M By Star Witness - Scavenger (51-8-3-8). Far effort in 7-34 len 8th of 11 (7) \$5500 58.0 Majestic Wings 1400m Warren (Bm58) Good (4) Nov 12. Laid out in straight when 1-17 len 3rd of 12 (4) \$2400 60.5 Yael's Delight 1000m Glandra (Bm50) Good (3) Dec 30. Nomedr for win but kept on for the minor pools at Glandra last outing. Not likely.

LINDEN TREE (Connie Greig) 6G By Redoute's Choice - Louisa (58-7-6-6). Balanced up midfield when 3 len 6th of 12 (2) \$600 62.0 Weave That Web 1400m Warren (Bm50) Good (4) Dec 5. Tried hard when 1 len 3rd of 8 (7) \$460 61.5 Ned Dawn 1400m Wellington (Bm50) Good (3) Dec 26. Made the running and kept on to just miss in similar company at Wellington last outing. Others better.

MARYLAND BRIDGE (Paul Clisby) 4M By Pariah - Veneers (NZ) (21-2-0). Keen when 8 len 8th of 10 (4) \$1100 56.5 Zedan 1300m

MARYBOROUGH TROTS

TODAY TAB CODE: MH
ALL RACES LIVE ON SKY & TAB APP
TAB.COM.AU FOXTEL 526
**MULTIPLES DD 5 & 7 EARLY QUADDIE 1, 2, 3, 4
TREBLE 6, 7, 8 QUADDIE 5, 6, 7, 8 BIG 6 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8**

1	12.52	CARISBROOK MOTORS PACE	EQ1
1	24637	OHEMMIAY CRESCO	Gary Peltin
2	05742	DOOD DONT THINK	Alex Ashwood
3	99992	SPORTS WRACK	Ewa Justice (C)
4	05636	BUDSIDEWINDER	Jack Laugher
5	59463	ROCKETS MATE	Ellen Tomney
6	42737	RUBY WINGATE	Ryan Duffy
7	85r0r	TREACHEROUSTIMES	Glen Bul

Second Line
8 56 MY GREAT EIGHT Jordan Leedham (C) Fr 49 11.00

OVERVIEW: RUBY WINGATE (6) capable mare that has been racing against stronger company and looks hard to beat in this. ROCKETS MATE (5) finished off nicely last start and is amongst the winning chances. BUDSIDEWINDER (4) close two starts ago but disappointed last run. Can do much better and must be given another chance. TREACHEROUSTIMES (7) he's better than his figure form suggest and improvement would not surprise. Both OHEMMIAY CRESCO (1) DOOD DONT THINK (2) and SPORTS WRACK (3) have favourable draws to be well poised and will get every chance.

EARLY SPEED: 1, 2, 3
SELECTIONS: RUBY WINGATE (6) Rockets Mate (5) Budd Sidewinder (4) Treacheroustimes (7)
RATINGS: 6/5/4/7/1/2/3
SUGGESTED BET: RUBY WINGATE (6) to Win.

2	1.27	MARYBOROUGH HIGHLAND SOCIETY	EQ2
1	6659	MARLO MAREAU	Katrina Can
2	6659	LETSGETROWDY	Chris Svanoso
3	754	LONGAN VIPER	Jordan Leedham (C)
4	4222	COOPER CLEAVER	Michael Belman
5	37	SOHO SOLITAIRE	Michael Stanley
6	7578	HARRO HILL	Josh Duggan
7	06595	COBARGO WARLOCK	Michelle Phillips

Second Line
8 6528 HEAVENS GIFT James Herbertson (C) Fr 49 6.50
9 6935 SUE NIEN Ewa Justice (C) Fr 48 11.00

OVERVIEW: COOPER CLEAVER (4) is an improving pacer that is working up to a win after some promising performances and looks suited here. Hard to beat SOHO SOLITAIRE (5) good effort at her race debut and performed below par last start though had excuses. Can bounce back here. LETSGETROWDY (2) has been slightly disappointing at this two runs back from a spell and should be improved by the race experience and will find this an easier assignment. Worthy of another chance. HEAVENS GIFT (8) has been around the placings to date and will get a soft tip and must be respected. MARLO MAREAU (1) first starter drawn well and expect a forward showing whilst LONGAN VIPER (3) HARRO HILL (6) COBARGO WARLOCK (7) and SUE NIEN (9) cannot be dismissed.

EARLY SPEED: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
SELECTIONS: COOPER CLEAVER (4) Letsgetrowdy (2) Heavens Gift (8) Soho Solitaire (5)
RATINGS: 4/2/8/5/1/3/6/7/9
SUGGESTED BET: COOPER CLEAVER (4) to Win.

3	2.02	MARYBOROUGH GOLF CLUB	B61 EQ3
1	24630	ACE DUGAN	Daniel Mannix (C)
2	34688	GOODTIME STRYKER	Jacqui Barker
3	817	BETTERHANFLYHIGH	Glen Bul
4	05198	SUGOI ALTO	Michael Belman
5	57744	MIDNIGHT MUSIC	Ashley Answorth
6	05935	DANCIN DOLLY	Katrina Can
7	36596	MYSHANIA	James Herbertson (C)

Second Line
8 46739 SILVER DOMINO Jordan Leedham (C) Fr 37 5.00
9 16551 ALL GOOD (Em) Taylor Youl (C) Fr 43
10 97867 CLARENDS SCOOTER Ryan Duffy Fr 43
11 75860 SWEET FACE Sean O'Sullivan (C) Fr 30 24.50

OVERVIEW: SUGOI ALTO (4) won a similar race three starts ago by leading throughout and will attempt to do the same here. Define daim. CLARENDS SCOOTER (10) capable of improving his figure for form in this and was a winner in November against similar company. Define chance. SILVER DOMINO (8) does have more wins than most of the opposition and can threaten along with ACE DUGAN (1) that has the perfect draw whilst GOODTIME STRYKER (2) BETTERHANFLYHIGH (3) MIDNIGHT MUSIC (5) and DANCIN DOLLY (6) can't be ruled out in an even race.

EARLY SPEED: 1, 2, 3, 4
SELECTIONS: SUGOI ALTO (4) Clarenden Scooter (10) Silver Domino (8) Ace Dugan (1)
RATINGS: 4/10/8/1/2/3/5/6
SUGGESTED BET: SUGOI ALTO (4) to Win.

4	2.37	COMMUNITY BANK BRANCHESTROT	B62 EQ4
1	8676	BILLY VALLEY	Ian White
2	43532	SURPRISE TO ME (Em)	Rory Coverdale (C)
3	59606	BOUTIKA	Ashley Answorth
4	8574	ASTRO	Chris Alford
5	66631	TENSION SEEKER	Scott Tomney
6	51445	MASTER COMBATANT	Ellen Tomney
7	9158	MORSURE DAMOUR	Michelle Wright

Second Line
8 03383 PERSEVERANCE Nicholas O'Connor (C) Fr 32 11.00
9 03310 STELLAR STRUT Luke Dunne (C) Fr 39 8.50
10 00947 WHATS THE TEA James Herbertson (C) Fr 30 11.00
11 57906 SETTLE THE BILL Eddie Corroy Fr 34 8.50

OVERVIEW: TENSION SEEKER (5) ran on well to win last start and on that performance looks a major threat again. ASTRO (4) wasn't far away last start and can make his presence felt again along with MASTER COMBATANT (6) that is never far away. MORSURE DAMOUR (7) slips it and can win this but needs to trot throughout. Both BOUTIKA (3) and SETTLE THE BILL (11) might be the value chances in the race and can't be ruled out. At their best they are genuine chances in an open race.

EARLY SPEED: 4, 5, 6, 7
SELECTIONS: TENSION SEEKER (5) Astro (4) Master Combatant (6) Morsure Damour (7)
RATINGS: 5/4/6/7/3/11
SUGGESTED BET: TENSION SEEKER (5) to Win.

5	3.12	BENSTUD STAND AND BRED'S PACE	DD1 B63 Q1
1	45875	TACTICS ARE ROLLIN	Luke Bryant
2	69894	SHEROCKS SHEROLLS	Karen Kendall
3	35693	ETIZ AMODEL	Kerryn Manning
4	1163	SHADY DANCER	Jacqui Barker
5	79843	ROCKIN CHARMER	Nicholas O'Connor (C)
6	82651	STRAIGHT UP	Ryan Sanderson (C)
7	32816	YOURSNINE	Robert Walters

Second Line
8 51423 DREAMERS DELIGHTNZ Taylor Youl (C) Fr 51 4.00
9 5073 OZZIE JOYBELL Josh Duggan Fr 51
10 5073 OZZIE JOYBELL Josh Duggan Fr 51

OVERVIEW: OZZIE JOYBELL (9) progressive mare that still leads race experience but shows plenty of talent. Lovely effort last start and expect her to be savaging the line. Hard to hold out. Stable mates DREAMERS DELIGHT (8) and YOURSNINE (7) both have their share of talent and are suited amongst these. Both can figure in the finish. SHEROCKS SHEROLLS (2) speedy mare that can race handy and must be respected. TACTICS ARE ROLLIN (1) drawn well and can improve. Don't dismiss.

EARLY SPEED: 2, 3
SELECTIONS: OZZIE JOYBELL (9) Dreamers Delight (8) Yoursnine (7) Sherocks Sherolls (2)
RATINGS: 9/8/7/2/1
SUGGESTED BET: OZZIE JOYBELL (9) to Win.

BEST BETS WITH ROB AUBER

BEST BET
COOPER CLEAVER (4)
(RACE 2 NO.4)

BEST VALUE
OZZIE JOYBELL (9)
(RACE 5 NO.9)

BEST ROUGHIE
MADAM REACTOR (3)
(RACE 8 NO.3)

\$50 FLEXI EARLY QUADDIE FOR 26.04%
4.5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

\$50 FLEXI QUADDIE FOR 37.03%
7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

6	3.52	ALDEBARAN PARK HANDICAP	B64 Q2
1	2000	BEAUTIFUL SUNRISE	Ashley Answorth
2	2260	KYVALLEY SURFRIDER	Chris Alford
3	36366	NORTHOLT	Josh Duggan
4	24654	SHIELD MAIDEN	Anne Marie Conroy
5	68251	CHRISTMAS BABE NZ	Shannon O'Sullivan
6	74596	ARABELLA SHOWDOWN	Nicholas O'Connor (C)
7	36502	ALDEBARAN SELENA	Lelani Justice (C)

Second Line
8 42856 GLENGARRIFF Jackie Barker Fr 46 15.00
9 90680 FLING IT RAINBOW James Herbertson (C) Fr 51 21.00
10 01843 CHARLIE WALKER Michael Belman Fr 54
11 00874 CORK Dedan Murphy (C) Fr 54
12 21538 ALDEBARAN BOYD Ewa Justice (C) Fr 55 8.50

OVERVIEW: KYVALLEY SURFRIDER (2) is first up since October but enjoyed a great campaign last time in work under the astute care of Katrina Fitzpatrick. Normally races well fresh and can settle handy and is worthy of each way ticket. CHARLIE WALKER (10) has been racing with great zest and looks hard to hold out again. SHIELD MAIDEN (4) races well under these conditions and at the track. Define chance. CHRISTMAS BABE (5) getting back into form and must be respected. ARABELLA SHOWDOWN (6) CORK (11) ALDEBARAN BOYD (12) have been racing against stronger opposition and are not out of this.

EARLY SPEED: 2, 4, 5
SELECTIONS: KYVALLEY SURFRIDER (2) Charlie Walker (10) Shield Maiden (4) Christmas Babe (5)
RATINGS: 2/10/4/5/6/11/12
SUGGESTED BET: KYVALLEY SURFRIDER (2) Each Way.

7	4.32	HARAS DESTROTTEURS	DD2 B65 Q3
1	5409	TINEY (Em)	Ben Xirha (C) Fr 51
2	72931	THE VIC CARIS	Kevin Weidenbach Fr 51 8.00
3	57307	MINIMEZ	Michelle Wright Fr 52 8.00
4	59977	SOUTHBOUND RED	Jacqui Barker Fr 54 34.00
5	9766	AZALEA MAE	Brett Shipway Fr 52 8.00
6	4724	WISTFULLADY	Nicholas O'Connor (C) Fr 42 11.00
7	55546	CADENCE LANE	Kerryn Manning Fr 53 24.50

Second Line
8 59445 POPPY POPSTAR Nick Youngson Fr 53 13.00
9 66452 DOUBLE DOT Lauren White (C) Fr 30 13.00
10 31625 FREDRHYNS Michael Belman Fr 52 7.50
11 24431 FLYING FLYNN Michael Belman Fr 49 11.00
12 58214 ROLL WITH ROSCO Clinton Wedham Fr 44 11.00
13 21 ARGYLE ROCKS Ashley Answorth Fr 53 11.00

OVERVIEW: CADENCE LANE (7) has proven to be a headliner in recent times for legendary trainer Peter Manning having been in winning positions at her past two starts and appearing to break stride for no reason. If she trots, she can win! Take on trust! FREDRHYNS (10) going well enough to be a winning chance in this and can figure. ARGYLE ROCKS (13) talented but still learning. Tough draw but can run well. THE VICARS GIRL (2) MINIMEZ (3) AZALEA MAE (5) all have favourable draws to race prominent and must be respected. DOUBLE DOT (9) FLYING FLYNN (11) ROLL WITH ROSCO (12) are racing well and can't be dismissed.

EARLY SPEED: 2, 3, 5, 7
SELECTIONS: CADENCE LANE (7) Fredrhy (10) Argyle Rocks (13) The Vicars Girl (2)
RATINGS: 7/10/13/2/3/5/9/11/12
SUGGESTED BET: CADENCE LANE (7) to Win.

8	5.12	MCPHERSONS PRINTING GROUP	B66 Q4
1	88696	OUTBACK QUEENIE	Michael Belman
2	04870	MADAME ANNIE (Em)	Taylor Youl (C)
3	58656	MADAM REACTOR	Shannon O'Sullivan
4	58194	DURBAICHAIBE	Liam O'Leary (C)
5	1544	WICHITA KANSAS	Lelani Justice (C)
6	59621	MCDORMON	Luke Dunne (C)
7	21556	MISS HERMES	Ellen Tomney

Second Line
8 76418 OZZIE JOY Jack Laugher Fr 59 11.00
9 20773 SLICE OF CHEDDAR Chris Alford Fr 57 4.50
10 15507 WINGATE GUY Ryan Duffy Fr 58 6.50
11 87885 DOUBLE THE HUNTER Michelle Phillips Fr 58 8.50
12 92605 CASTING SHADOW Alex Ashwood Fr 59 11.00
13 5415 AMORE ROCK Jordan Leedham (C) Fr 59 8.00

OVERVIEW: SLICE OF CHEDDAR (9) is the rising pacer from the pack that needs to step up into this next class. Chased home a smart horse last start and back to a bigger track should suit. Define chance. MADAM REACTOR (3) could be one at better odds that gets under the guard. Has completed in races where the form line has been exceptional and would not shock. WINGATE GUY (10) DOUBLE THE HUNTER (11) CASTING SHADOW (12) AMORE ROCK (13) are seasoned paces that drop in class and all have ability and must come under consideration for this. WHICHITA KANSAS (5) going well but meeting slight stronger opposition. Respect. The dominant Julie Douglas team of MISS HERMES (7) and OZZIE JOY (8) are always capable whilst MCDORMON (6) is racing well though this is harder than recent starts.

EARLY SPEED: 1, 3, 4
SELECTIONS: SLICE OF CHEDDAR (9) Madam Reactor (3) Wingate Guy (10) Double The Hunter (11)
RATINGS: 9/3/10/11/12/13/5/7/8/6
SUGGESTED BET: SLICE OF CHEDDAR (9) to Win.

9	5.52	PETER EGANBI-RITE ELECTRICAL	B67 Q5
1	40763	SUMMERHILL	Ryan Sanderson (C)
2	29051	FOREIGN CONCLUSIONNZ	Luke Dunne (C)
3	86127	HAND WRITER	Jack Laugher
4	37428	ICANMOTOR	Ryan Duffy
5	20428	WITTEN COURAGE	Sean O'Sullivan (C)
6	77551	BLUE OCEAN	Glen Bul
7	87244	GLENS OF TIKOA NZ	Liam O'Leary (C)

Second Line
8 69524 ERNIELOVENBOY Michelle Phillips Fr 41 6.00
9 31775 EAGLES AND INDIANS Alex Ashwood Fr 42 6.00
10 16551 ALL GOOD (Em) Taylor Youl (C) Fr 43
11 92076 PLAYNICE Ellen Tomney Fr 35 8.00

EARLY SPEED: 1, 2, 3, 5
SELECTIONS: ERNIELOVENBOY (8) Eagles And Indians (9) Hand Writer (3) Kanimotor (4)
RATINGS: 8/9/3/4/6
SUGGESTED BET: ERNIELOVENBOY (8) Each Way.

TAB APP TAB.COM.AU

TODAY TAB CODE: EG

1	11.21	SPORTSBET
1	44844	PRETTY WITH IT
2	41946	CORTEZ BAILE
3	40824	ZIPPING GWEN
4	42556	PEGLEG PETE
5	4983	JACOBY BAILE
6	5061	FIGURE IT OUT
7	26232	REDEMER RUSLIE
8	11	HARTINE Y
9	56566	TWILIGHT STYLE Res.

Watchdog says: HARTINE Y (8) has posted scintillating wins in his first 2 starts and he looks awfully hard to beat again here. PEGLEG PETE (4) was far from disgraced at Group level last start and can challenge with luck. CORTEZ BAILE (2) has claims as well. Tips: 8, 4, 2, 6. Trifecta 8/246/234/6 (\$10 - 11.17%).

2	11.36	SPORTSBET
1	23943	MAXIMUM LYN
2	2753	CARLYBALE
3	1455	BUCK SHINES
4	4732	MOGAW SWIFT
5	3921	TAT LIBBY
6	68855	HE NUTTY GUS
7	13453	FINDERS KEEPERS
8	6331	LEROY'S GIRL
9	56566	TWILIGHT STYLE Res.

Watchdog says: FINDERS KEEPERS (7) can show solid mid race pace in this race and they may prove hard to hold out within our circle. TAT LIBBY (5) has posted smart wins in 2 of her last 3 starts and can challenge. HE NUTTY GUS (6) has claims as well. Tips: 1, 5, 6, 3, 2, 4.

3	11.52	SPORTSBET
1	4252	FRANK GRIMES
2	14427	DETROIT
3	28137	MAXIMUM MORELAND
4	34325	ONION PEARL
5	33334	RAM ROCKS
6	72235	DIVA DANCER
7	28511	HEL OF NINTYRE
8	44521	MICHELLE JOHN
9	56566	TWILIGHT STYLE Res.

Watchdog says: RAM ROCKS (5) has shown plenty of talent in his 2 starts to date and he can return to the winners list with an ounce of luck. MAXIMUM MORELAND (3) was a solid city winner 3 starts back and can challenge. DIVA DANCER (6) has talent as well. Tips: 5, 3, 6, 1, 2, 4. Box Quella 3/5/6 (\$10 for 333.33%).

4	12.07	TOP CAT VIDEO DANCE DASH
1	24056	MISTRESS SOANS
2	4046	LATIN RHYTHM
3	3451	DAHOE VIE
4	5421	PRESITA
5	54755	ELLIS MY GIRL
6	2451	MAGIC RIDE
7	32491	RAPIDFIRE GIRL
8	13381	SALIA GIBLET
9	57335	MELINA VELLA Res.
10	36555	OUT AND DREAMING Res.

Watchdog says: RAPIDFIRE GIRL (7) can cross and lead from box nine in this and she will be hard to reel in if she does so. MAGIC RIDE (6) has posted solid wins away from home in her last 2 starts and can challenge. PRESITA (4) has claims as well. Tips: 7, 6, 4, 1. Trifecta 6/7/4/1 (\$10 - 83.33%).

5	12.22	ELITE COLLARS & LEADS
1	1262	REEMA BAILE
2	38341	BUMPY'S DAD ROY
3	14422	MAXIMUM ANG
4	1214	TATTOOED
5	40745	MIDNIGHT ROCKER
6	66313	AVIANNA
7	75581	ARTS INFERNO
8	40448	CARULLLO
9	1587	IT'S GOT LEGS Res.
10	70446	RAPIDFIRE FORE ST Res.

Watchdog says: TATTOOED (4) looks like a serious prospect and he may only need an ounce of luck at box nine to pick up again here. BUMPY'S DAD ROY (2) was a solid 2196 30m winner here last start and he can challenge. REEMA BAILE (1) has plenty of talent as well. Tips: 4, 2, 1, 6. Trifecta 4/1/2/6 (\$10 - 11.17%).

6	12.38	GPP LASER 3300
1	26755	ROLLIN FREE
2	24853	CRACKERJACK JET
3	1661	CRACKERJACKING
4	48552	FROSTY JACK
5	24732	YEAH SO WHAT
6	40745	CHEAP CHARLIE
7	2051	APOLLO RIOT
8	24223	MY ALL MANNERED
9	37243	UNDER ARREST Res.
10	3355	KNEE WITH THAT Res.

Watchdog says: CHEAP CHARLIE (6) can explode soon after box nine in his race and he will find the easier than his recent outings. YEAH SO WHAT (5) has posted solid placings in his last 2 starts and can challenge. ELANGA (7) has plenty of ability as well. Tips: 6, 5, 1, 3. Trifecta 6/5/1 (\$10 for 333.33%).

7	1.00	NAGAMBIE GUTTER CLEANING
1	27973	ELANGA
2	24853	CRACKERJACK JET
3	1661	CRACKERJACKING
4	48552	FROSTY JACK
5	24732	YEAH SO WHAT
6	40745	CHEAP CHARLIE
7	2051	APOLLO RIOT
8	24223	MY ALL MANNERED
9	37243	UNDER ARREST Res.
10	3355	KNEE WITH THAT Res.

Watchdog says: CHEAP CHARLIE

CROSSCOURT

with Matt Logue
& Michael Randall

Wildcats do too little

Perth Wildcats have come under fire for leaving import forward Kristian Doolittle on the court for nine minutes after a head knock.

Doolittle (pictured) looked clearly dazed after running into a Mitch Creek screen at the start of the third quarter in Saturday night's Wildcats-Phoenix clash at RAC Arena.

NBL commentator Peter Hooley noticed the incident – which left Doolittle shaken and grabbing his head – and called for the Wildcats import to immediately be assessed.

"Doolittle needs to come out of this game," Hooley said. "He bumped heads with Mitch Creek and he is stumbling for a little bit. He looks really worse for wear and it took him a while to get over half court. If I'm the Perth Wildcats staff, I'd be having a quick check over anything to do with the head. Here is

the incident – it looked like (Doolittle) was trying to gain his balance."

Minutes passed and Doolittle remained on the floor in the third quarter, despite appearing dazed and shaking his head. It coincided with the Wildcats failing to score a point to start the third after having a double-figure lead at the break.

Hooley couldn't believe a dazed Doolittle remained in the game.

"I'm still shocked he is out there," he said. "You've got to get Doolittle out of this game right now, the way he is still holding his head."

"He is not right whatsoever and he has continued to hold his head. The word has got to get down to the Wildcats bench – he is still doing it (holding his head) now trying to gather himself."

"He has just got to get out of this game and someone has to check on him. He is looking for a sub right now – he is clearly not right."

Doolittle finally got subbed out with 4.55 minutes remaining in the third quarter.

The incident prompted Hooley to declare basketball as a sport is "really poor at trying to look after the head".

Melbourne United has been thorough when dealing with concussions involving Matthew Dellavedova and Shea Ili but the Doolittle incident wasn't a good look for Perth. It's why Hooley was within his rights to call it out.

"Any player that has to deal with any sort of concussion – just watching it – it gives me a shivers to be honest," he said.

"Because he has been doing this since they bumped heads and the immediate reaction of trying to find his balance is really unsettling to watch."

Doolittle's concussion also didn't go unnoticed online, with fans taking to X to leave a barrage of comments.

"What's wrong with the Perth Wildcats' coaching and medical team that they can't see how Doolittle is struggling after clashing heads earlier?" one fan asked.

"Why leave him out there so long?"

Another supporter said: "Get Doolittle off Perth Wildcats his head isn't right. Protect the player."

Wildcats coach John Rillie was asked about Doolittle post-game.

"He is with the doctors going through the medical testing they do," Rillie said.

"We've just got to wait and see what the results with that are. Tough to see."

LOCK IN TATUM FOR LONG TERM

Justin Tatum is firming to be offered the Illawarra job full-time after guiding the Hawks from the NBL's cellar to the top six.

Tatum has been terrific in reigniting the struggling Hawks – and deserves to be rewarded with a long-term deal.

The father of Boston Celtics superstar Jayson Tatum has proven his worth in the interim role as a man manager who can get the best out of his players.

This was on show in the double overtime win against the JackJumpers on Saturday.

Illawarra officials should secure Tatum now, to start building for next season and beyond.

Adams too good to be lazy

Jaylen Adams is one of the finest players the NBL has seen in recent years, so he is better than just giving up on a defensive play.

This was on show during Sydney's disappointing loss to Adelaide on Thursday night.

The Kings had everything to play for, coming off consecutive home defeats.

Instead, Sydney turned up to Adelaide and laid an egg, especially on the defensive end.

The Kings gave up 42 points in the first half to look "all lost at sea" in defence, according to the commentary team.

Adams was called out by commentator Ryan Broekhoff late in the fourth quarter, when he gave up a turnover, but just stopped and didn't chase back on an Adelaide fast break.

"Look at the effort from Adams – there is no effort getting back in defensive transition – he just stopped," Broekhoff said.

"That's not the effort that you need at this point in the game. Make a mistake, that's fine, but get back on defence."

Adams responded in style on Sunday, dropping a game-high 39 points in Sydney's blowout win over the New Zealand Breakers.



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EVERY NBL GAME
ON ESPN
VIA FOXTEL
& KAYO

Kings coach Mahmoud Abdelfattah speaks to Jaylen Adams during the clash with Adelaide.
Picture: Getty Images

NBL 2023-24 SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY

Phoenix v 36ers
7.30 pm,
State Basketball Centre

THURSDAY

Hawks v Taipans
7.30 pm, WIN
Entertainment Centre

FRIDAY

JackJumpers v
Melbourne United
7.30 pm,
MyState Bank Arena
Wildcats v Bullets
9.30 pm, RAC Arena

SATURDAY

Breakers v Phoenix
5.30 pm, Spark Arena
Hawks v 36ers
8 pm, WIN Entertainment
Centre

SUNDAY

Kings v Wildcats
2 pm, Qudos Bank Arena
Taipans v Bullets
4 pm, Cairns
Convention Centre

STANDINGS

	W	L	Pctg
Melbourne United	16	5	108.4
Perth Wildcats	13	7	102.6
Tasmania JJs	11	11	105.3
Sydney Kings	11	11	101.6
Brisbane Bullets	11	11	98.2
Illawarra Hawks	9	10	99.0
Cairns Taipans	10	12	98.9
SE Melbourne Phoenix	9	12	94.6
NZ Breakers	8	12	98.6
Adelaide 36ers	7	14	93.5

Phoenix desperate to rise from cursed season in push for finals



Gary Browne is battling injury.

Injuries have hit the South East Melbourne Phoenix hard again this season – and it will prompt the club to conduct a review of its medical procedures.

The Phoenix is in eighth position on the NBL ladder following another inconsistent campaign, and while the team is not blaming injuries for its slide, it acknowledges it has played a role.

Phoenix has lost Craig Mol-

ler for the season (knee), while guard Gary Browne has battled with a groin injury for extended periods.

The club's injury woes reached breaking point in a blowout loss to Illawarra without key stars Browne, Alan Williams and new import Abdel Nader due to injury.

South East Melbourne owner Romie Chaudhari confirmed the club would look into its recent injury issues.

"Injuries have played a big part in our season too, and while we don't make excuses, we have to factor that in," Chaudhari said.

"As a club, we will review our medical processes in the post-season and look at ways to not have a repeat of what has happened in NBL24."

The Phoenix remains in the mix for a top-six finals berth, but we'll need to start stringing wins together to catch the likes

of Brisbane, Sydney and Illawarra.

Chaudhari has a simple message to his team with five regular season rounds remaining.

"The NBL title race remains a tight one so I've implored the club, the team and the staff to fight for every inch," he said.

"A few wins catapult us right back into title contention and that's what we're focused on."

"We have five home games

left and we expect to cause some trouble late in the season and give our fans something to be proud of."

"As the late great Jimmy Valvano said, 'don't give up, don't ever give up'."

"Of course we'd want to have more wins on court, but this season was a refresh for the team, a new coach and assistants and a bevy of new players that need time to set the foundation for future successes."

WORLD GAME TACKLE



with Robbie Slater and Marco Monteverde

Foreign legion shows way

LIKE



Stars rise to the occasion. The highlight of "Unite Round" was seeing two of the A-League's best foreign players lift their teams to another level in Friday's pulsating 3-3 draw between Macarthur FC and Western United.

The Bulls' Ulises Davila and United's Penha were superb, scoring five goals between them at CommBank Stadium in one of the games of the season.

Arguably the best player in the competition, Macarthur's Mexican captain Davila was not going to let his side leave the ground without anything to show for its efforts.

And Penha, who is seemingly close to regaining the superb form he displayed at Newcastle a couple of seasons ago, was equally as determined in his efforts to inject much-needed life into United's season.

Such were their performances, it was perhaps fitting the game ended in a draw.

The A-League needs more games like that where the competition's foreign talent show why their clubs put so much faith and trust in them.

Davila summed it up perfectly after the match when he suggested that imports needed to be better than the competition's Australian players, otherwise there was no point bringing them to the A-League.

HIRO WORSHIP

And while we're praising the A-League's imports, let's not forget Adelaide United's Japanese striker Hiroshi Ibusuki, who netted a magnificent hat-trick in the Reds' pulsating 4-3 win over Sydney FC at Allianz Stadium on Saturday night.

"Hiro" has now scored six goals in his past five games and it's extremely timely considering he's off-contract at the end of the season.

Ibusuki loves Adelaide and

PLAYER OF THE ROUND



Ulises Davila (Macarthur FC)

wants to stay and his recent form is making it very hard for the Reds to not offer him a new deal to stay.

However, Adelaide coach Carl Veart also

wants to bring a new striker to the club in the current transfer window. Perhaps that's also spurring on Ibusuki – and that's what Veart wants.

Competition for places will only make the Reds stronger and, despite Ibusuki's recent

spate of goals, there's no doubt that Adelaide – which will lose teenage forward Nestory Irankunda to Bayern Munich next season – needs more depth in attack.

DISLIKE

FC MISSES RODWELL

The importance of Jack Rodwell to Sydney FC's defence was evident in his absence in the Sky Blues' 4-3 weekend loss to Adelaide.

The Sydneysiders, who will be without the injured Rodwell for eight weeks, were torn to

shreds by the Reds.

Before Saturday night's defeat, the Sky Blues had won three successive matches, all of which involved the former English Premier League star, who has only made four appearances this season due to ongoing injury problems.

Rodwell brings much-needed composure and calmness to Sydney's back four. Without him, the Sky Blues' defence was lost on Saturday night.

It's no wonder Sydney coach Ufuk Talay was furious on the sideline. Conceding four goals

SOCCEROOS IN NEED OF CUTTING EDGE

Robbie Slater Analysis

The lack of a genuine playmaker could hurt the Socceroos at this Asian Cup.

This is the first major tournament in recent years where Australia hasn't had both or either of Tom Rogic or Aaron Mooy, "No.10s" who pull the strings and can play the killer ball that tear defences apart.

Throw in the absence of Ajdin Hrustic, who has also played that role for the Socceroos in recent years, and it's a problem for the Australians that was evident in their opening 2-0 win over India.

While the Indians never looked like winning, the Socceroos struggled to break them down.

Australia's final third was a problem. India was extremely resolute in defence and the Socceroos found it hard to break down their opponents.

It happens often when the Aussies play lowly-ranked teams that sit back and defend in a low block.

It's a different story when the Socceroos play against heavyweights of world football who attack and play an open style of football.

That leaves space in their

own half that Graham Arnold's men enjoy exposing on the counter-attack. It plays to our strengths.

Against teams like India and some others the Socceroos will meet at the Asian Cup, we have to make the play in trying to break down sides.

It's something the Australians need to work on, but it will improve as the tournament progresses.

In Riley McGree, who had a big impact when he came on against India, the Socceroos have, while not a genuine playmaker, someone who can have a big effect on games.

Winger Martin Boyle can as well. He looked short of a gallop against India, but will be better for the run.

Set pieces are normally a strength for the Socceroos, with giant defender Harry Souttar an obvious target when taking free-kicks and corners.

However, it's hard to remember Souttar having a header in India's penalty area, with the service from Craig Goodwin and Boyle lacking quality and penetration.

Therefore, there's a fair bit to work on for Australia.

The main thing is that the Socceroos opened their Cup campaign with a win and were never in danger of losing the game.

on your home ground isn't good enough.

LET'S BE CONSISTENT

Handball confusion continues to mar the competition.

The evidence seemed pretty clear that the ball hit the outstretched arm of Western Sydney midfielder Josh Brillante in the dying stages of his side's 1-0 win over Melbourne City at CommBank Stadium on Friday night.

City, understandably, claimed a penalty and, when referee Jonathan Barreiro went to the sideline to check

the video footage, it seemed certain he was going to change his mind and award the Melbourne side a spot kick.

However, after watching numerous replays of the incident, Barreiro stuck with his original decision not to point to the penalty spot.

It seemed that Brillante's arm was away from body and not in a "natural position", so why wasn't a penalty awarded?

If the same thing happens in the A-League this week, you can bet that a penalty will be given. All that anybody wants is consistency.

Blink in Sydney and you would've easily missed Unite Round

DISLIKES

It is said to have brought 42,000 interstate visitors to Sydney but if you weren't a diehard football fan, you wouldn't even know Unite Round was happening.

Not one advertisement was seen on the back of a bus, no signs were hanging from lamp posts or strung from buildings and not one taxi driver who

ferried me from venue to venue had even heard about it. Crowd numbers were in line with average figures but only 1130 fans watched Melbourne Victory play Perth Glory.

Attendance jumped for the second clash between Central Coast Mariners and Wellington Phoenix.

However, considering the Mariners are based just an hour away and their recent home games have pulled

crowds of 5000 and 2000, the marketing of the event must be questioned.

Maybe organisers wanted to keep it quiet for the inaugural event – test the waters or avoid going too big, too early.

Or perhaps they just didn't give themselves enough time.

The round, which was designed to get the NSW Government to relinquish the grand final hosting rights it had bought the year before,

was announced in October, just weeks after the fixtures had been released.

While far from unsuccessful, Unite Round could have been bigger if the APL had backed itself.

LIKES

CHLOE STAR OF SHOW

Michelle Heyman was given the credit for Canberra's first win in six weeks when she

netted twice. However, Canberra keeper Chloe Lincoln was the real hero.

The 19-year-old has endured a tough season as Canberra conceded more goals than any other club.

Against Adelaide, Lincoln was a shining star, making three crucial saves in the first half that meant Canberra went into halftime at 0-0.

It is exciting to see a keeper so young given a chance.

TIGHT TABLE

The luxury of a full home-and-away season has given teams some leeway and even competition leader Melbourne City has stumbled a few times.

However, with just 10 rounds to go and four points the difference between third and 10th place on the ladder, every game is going to matter in the race to the finals. The tight competition makes for some exciting football.

No joking matter for Smith

Daniel Cherny

Steve Smith says Australian selectors thought he was joking when he canvassed the idea of replacing David Warner as Test opener.

Smith said on Sunday he had floated the idea as early as during last year's Ashes tour but it wasn't until the start of 2024 the idea of him moving alongside Usman Khawaja started to grow serious legs.

Asked if he thought the selectors had taken him seriously when he raised the prospect of an elevation to the top of the order, Smith said: "Not really."

"I've kind of been pushing it for a few weeks, even before Perth I think and it might have been floated in England, just



randomly I said, 'I'll get up top and I'm happy to play up top'.

"In Perth, I kind of said, 'you know after Davey's done I'm actually keen to get up there'.

"I don't think they sort of took me seriously until I got to Sydney and I was like 'I'm actu-

ally being genuine here. I'd be keen to get up top and face the new ball.' And they were like, 'all right, well, we'll take that under advisement and see how it all looks'. You know, I think they are very keen to get Cameron (Green) in the side as well, I think and sort of play our best six batters.

"For me, it didn't sort of sit right having him come in and bat up top.

"I've played for a long time and I'm an experienced player and I think it's something I should have done."

Smith was talking in Adelaide, where the Test squad has convened before the start of the series against the West Indies.

He said he wasn't certain

whether he would play out his Test career as an opener but he didn't want to contemplate the possibility of failure.

"I don't want to think negative thoughts at all," Smith said. "So you can have your opinion on that."

"(I'm an opener) for now, I suppose. Depends what happens. If someone gets injured in the middle and the next batter is a genuine opener, maybe they slot back in there and I go back down.

"I don't know the answer but for right now we have what we believe is our best six batters playing and I'm slotting in up top."

The former Australian captain said he was relishing the chance to face the new ball and

he didn't enjoy having to wait to bat.

"I'm looking forward to it, the opportunity to get in and face the new ball," Smith said.

"It's something that isn't really foreign to me. There have been numerous occasions when I've come in early doors and batted at No.3 for quite a while there.

"Really, the only reason I went down to No.4 was because I was captain. I wanted to give myself some more time to just refresh mentally after thinking so much in the field before going out to bat and I don't have to do that any more."

"So it's perfect to get in early and face the music."

"I enjoy getting in and facing the new ball anyway."

While Smith said the captaincy had contributed to him dropping down the order, filling in for Pat Cummins on occasion would not require him to revert to No.4.

Smith said having all-rounder Green return to the side – a move allowed by Smith's shift up the order – was a major positive for the team with bat, ball and in the field.

"I mean, it's probably 40 runs a game saved at least there (at gully)," he said.

"So he's plus-40 before he even faces a ball, so it's pretty good. And the catches he takes there are incredible as well."

"So we're excited to have him back. It's like having four slips just standing next to each other in that region."

Odd Couple could script own Test hit

Robert Craddock

Steve Smith is so obsessed by batting he could talk about its many nuances all day and happily have them sprinkled on his cornflakes for breakfast.

Usman Khawaja loves batting too, but likes getting away from cricket off the field.

Smith has more quirky batting movements than a hip hop dancer, while Khawaja only moves when he has to and bats with the economical movement of a man saving every calorie for when it matters.

One style is complex. One is simple. One is left-handed. One is right. One was born in Sydney. The other in Islamabad.

They were raised on different sides of Sydney and made their first-class debuts for NSW three weeks apart, in 2008.

They both love aspects of the US – Smith owns an apartment in New York, while Khawaja can often be seen watching American basketball games on his phone.

Smith and Khawaja have some things in common, but many contrasts, as they prepare to become the Odd Couple opening combination no one expected through the majority of their international careers.

If you had suggested a few years ago, when Khawaja was batting at No.4 for Queensland and never



expecting to play another Test, that he and Smith would be Australia's 2024 five-day openers, any bookmaker would surely have offered 33-1 and been happy to take your money.

Who knows what will become of their post-David Warner union? But this much is certain – they click.

Over the past 11 years, Smith and Khawaja have been Australia's most bountiful batting partnership,



Steve Smith falls to an lbw decision, breaking his partnership with Usman Khawaja during the first Test against Pakistan in Perth and (inset) Smith at training in Adelaide on Sunday. Pictures: Getty Images

WEATHER FORECAST FOR ADELAIDE TEST

WEDNESDAY: 27C Sunny
THURSDAY: 26C Partly cloudy
FRIDAY: 29C Partly cloudy
SATURDAY: 34C Sunny
SUNDAY: 31C Sunny

with 10 century stands and 2470 runs at an average of 58.

Each of these three statistics are chart-toppers for Australia.

Admittedly, that was when Smith was batting down the order in Tests, so this is a fresh challenge.

The one thing certain with opening partnerships is that

nothing is certain when it comes to chemistry.

Justin Langer and Matthew Hayden were like brothers, on and off the field, and could often be spotted sharing dinner for two in Test week.

Geoff Marsh and David Boon would routinely share a frosty ale and Marsh became godfather to one of Boon's children.

But one of Australia's greatest opening unions – Bill Lawry and Bob Simpson – spent more time together in the middle than they did off the field.

"We were just completely different," Simpson said.

"Bill loved his pigeon racing where I would play golf, which didn't interest him at all. Somehow we clicked."

England's Mike Atherton and Alec Stewart were also very much a "business only" outfit. Atherton once said he never visited Stewart's place for dinner when the Test scene passed through his home region of Surrey, not for any particular reason other than they rarely had dinner together.

With a combined age of 71, Khawaja, 37, and Smith, 34, they are one of Australia's oldest opening combinations of recent times, but nowhere near the all-time record held by English greats Jack Hobbs (47) and Frank Woolley (43), when they had a combined age of 90 opening against Australia in 1930.

When it comes to opening the batting, there are no rules.

Johnson suspects a Banc robbery

Robert Craddock

Mitchell Johnson has questioned Steve Smith's promotion to opener and says selectors deserved to be asked whether Cameron Bancroft was the victim of a vendetta.

The snubbing of Bancroft has triggered a "Sandpapergate" scandal in Perth.

Locals are furious that their opener has missed a berth in the Test side to face the West Indies in Adelaide.

In his column for Perth's Sunday Times, Johnson said Smith had "long been the glue" of Australia's top order at No.4 and he could not understand the logic for changing things.

"You can't help but wonder why (selection chairman) George Bailey and the selection panel have gone this way," Johnson wrote. "Do they feel Smith hasn't been at his best and they think this could be a good change for him?"

"There are reports that Smithy doesn't like sitting around waiting to bat but he has done that most of his career at fourth in the order – and he's been pretty good at it."

Bailey has denied that the panel had any lingering bad vibes towards Bancroft following his fallout with the bowlers for comments he made about the Sandpapergate scandal.

"Bailey says there is no issue or vendetta but you can't blame Bancroft – or the public – for questioning this, if he is claiming the selection panel didn't consider the specialist opener among the nation's seven-best batters," Johnson wrote. "It's obviously a confusing message for the West Australian."



Cameron Bancroft

BBL, MANUKA OVAL	
SYDNEY THUNDER	
HALES c Nielsen b Boyce	43 (32)
WARNER c D.Short b Overton	13 (10)
BANCROFT run out (Kelly)	14 (16)
DAVIES c Pope b Overton	4 (4)
ROSS lbw b Pope	16 (17)
GILKES c M.Short b Overton	18 (16)
GREEN b Pope	19 (12)
SAMS not out	11 (6)
MCANDREW b Pope	0 (1)
HATCHER b Pope	0 (2)
SANGHA run out (Kelly)	0 (0)
EXTRAS: Tlb, Tw	2
TOTAL	140
FALL: 36, 69, 75, 107, 125, 139, 139, 139	
BOWLING: M.Short 4-0-24-0, Payne 2-0-16-0, Thornton 3-0-31-0, Overton 3.2-0-26-3, Boyce 4-0-20-1, Pope 3-0-22-4. OVERS: 19.2	
ADELAIDE STRIKERS	
M.SHORT not out	74 (49)
D.SHORT b Sangha	15 (17)
WEATHERALD not out	47 (31)
EXTRAS: 6lb, 2w	8
ONE WICKET FOR	144
FALL: 57	
BOWLING: Sams 3-0-22-0, Green 4-0-26-0, McAndrew 2-0-27-0, Sangha 4-0-27-1, Hatcher 1.1-0-18-0, Davies 2-0-18-0. Strikers win with 23 balls to spare	

Strikers end hope

Martin Gabor

Adelaide Strikers clinched the last remaining finals spot with a thumping nine-wicket win over Sydney Thunder who are likely to finish up with the wooden spoon after another dreadful display in Canberra.

Melbourne Stars were hoping that their fellow men in green could pull off a miracle, but it wasn't to be as the Strikers chased down the paltry 140 total with 23 balls to spare.

The Strikers won't get to play at home during the finals but they have the artillery to upset the top teams, especially if skipper Matt Short (74 off 49 balls) continues to pile on the runs.

He is the runaway leading run-scorer this season.

Scorchers snare Harris

Fresh from being bypassed for the Test squad, Marcus Harris has received some good news, signing a short-term deal with Perth Scorchers in the lead-up to the finals.

Harris rejoins the club after leaving for the Renegades in 2016. He did not enter this BBL season with a deal, having missed out amid uncertainty around his availability given he had been a peripheral member of the Test squad.

It's right time to walk away, declares Marsh



Melbourne Renegades batter Shaun Marsh, with his family in Perth, has announced his retirement from professional cricket.

Daniel Cherny

Shaun Marsh feels a sense of relief and sadness as he retires from professional cricket after almost a quarter of a century.

The West Australian great announced on Sunday the Big Bash League match between his Melbourne Renegades and Sydney Thunder on Wednesday night would be the last of a career that started 23 summers ago. Marsh, 40, played the last of his 38 Tests and 73 one-day internationals in 2019.

He kept playing domestically for WA before retiring at the end of last season.

Marsh continued into this BBL season with the Renegades after he moved from the Perth Scorchers in 2019.

Having overcome calf issues, his form has not diminished.

The left-hander has posted three half-centuries from five innings this season, including an unbeaten 64 to lead the Renegades to victory against Melbourne Stars on Saturday night at Marvel Stadium. But the Renegades' underwhelming season has contributed to Marsh's decision, which he made last week, to pull up stumps on his decorated career.

"I probably knew at the start of the season it was more than likely going to be my last year but there was no decision made up until probably after our second-last game ago," Marsh said on Sunday. "We had a nine-day break and went home with the family and just felt right then that this was going to be it."

"It's probably a sense of relief but also some sadness knowing it's all over – sort of leave knowing you gave everything and it's the right time to walk away. I think just mentally it was more knowing I was probably done ... my body, even though I feel like I'm batting really well. Just moving around in the field has been a lot harder this year. And I just thought it was the right time now with where we're at."

"I think everyone at the Renegades had high hopes this year of being a lot further up the ladder and not making the finals gives the guys a good chance to reset and get some younger players in and build around those players."

BIG BASH SCHEDULE TONIGHT

Stars v Hurricanes
MCG, 7.15pm

TOMORROW

Scorchers v Sixers
Perth Stadium, 7.40pm

WEDNESDAY

Thunder v Renegades
Sydney Showgrounds, 7.15pm

All matches live and ad-free in play on FOX CRICKET

BBL LADDER

	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
Heat	7	1	2	16	0.97
Scorchers	6	2	1	13	0.84
Sixers	5	2	2	12	0.36
Strikers	5	4	1	11	0.33
Stars	4	5	0	8	-1.14
Hurricanes	3	6	0	6	-0.34
Renegades	2	6	1	5	-0.29
Thunder	1	7	1	3	-0.65

The span of Marsh's career is extraordinary. He made his Sheffield Shield debut for WA in early 2001 playing alongside Tom Moody, who was born in 1965. This season he was on the Renegades' list with young gun Harry Dixon, who was born in 2005.

Marsh, the son of former Australian opener and coach Geoff and older brother of Aussie star Mitch, said team success with the Scorchers and a breakthrough Shield win with WA two summers ago were among the highlights of his career.

Though his Australian career was a mixed bag, he was proud to have reached the highest level and said he could now fully appreciate how special it had been to play international cricket with his brother.

Asked how he would like to be remembered as a player, Marsh, a popular if quiet teammate through his career, said he valued authenticity.

"I think just being a good person," he said. "I've always just tried to be myself. I've always tried not to be someone I'm not. And that's something I'm really proud of. And someone that worked hard and gave his best to the team in every game I played."

Windies coach's desperate plea to save Test cricket

Daniel Cherny

West Indies coach Andre Coley has called on cricket's leadership to put up or shut up when it comes to saving the Test format globally, while floating the idea of four-day Tests in a bid to make it more appealing to players.

The Windies have been widely written off for the Frank Worrell Trophy series, which

starts in Adelaide on Wednesday.

Having not beaten in Australia in a Test series in more than three decades, and not even won a Test against the Aussies in more than 20 years, the Windies have picked a squad that contains seven uncapped players.

Former captain Jason Holder and all-rounder Kyle Mayers have opted out of the series

to prioritise franchise commitments elsewhere. Such is life for the former Test powerhouse. The region can still produce world-class cricketers but can't pay them enough to always choose Test cricket.

It is not a new phenomenon for the Windies but they may merely have been the canary in the coalmine for the format given South Africa has named a massively depleted squad to

tour New Zealand this month after its board told its stars to put the India-backed SA20 competition first.

Australian cricket leaders have discussed the idea of setting up a global funding pool to ensure Test cricket remains viable for more than just a handful of nations.

Coley said talk was one thing but actions were another.

"If we have enough power-

brokers around world cricket who are keen on ensuring that Test cricket continues to be played and becomes a viable option for players, young players, then those people have to voice those opinions and in the lobbies and rooms that can make those decisions, and decisions are made accordingly," Coley said.

Her pondered whether shortening Tests from five to

four days could help make the format more commercially viable.

There are a handful of four-day Tests played outside the men's World Test Championship and in women's cricket.

"You may have to consider potentially Test matches making them four days because you look at the pace of Test matches, the majority of matches are finished in four days," he said.

CENTRE STAGE
**ROD LAVER
ARENA**

compiled by Todd Balym

DAY SESSION

1 Anna Karolina
Schmiedlova (Svk) v
4-Coco Gauff (USA)

US Open champ Gauff is the one to watch this tournament. The teenager is coming in off an Auckland victory and will start confidently against Schmiedlova, who she has twice beaten in straight sets. This is Schmiedlova's 10th AO appearance and she's yet to progress beyond the second round.

2 Zizou Bergs (Bel) v 7-
Stefanos Tsitsipas (Gre)

AO finalist last year, Tsitsipas returns still chasing a breakthrough slam. Originally scheduled to play Matteo Berrettini, the Greek world No. 7 will now face Belgian lucky loser Bergs after the Italian withdrew with an injury. Bergs had to retire due to severe cramps from his final qualifying game when holding a slender lead over Aussie Dane Sweeney.

NIGHT SESSION

10-Alex de Minaur
(Aus) v Milos Raonic
(Can)

Australia's great big hope for 2024 who is on a giant-killing run already this year with scalps such as Novak Djokovic and Alexander Zverev. 'Demon' faces a tough first-up assignment against former world No. 3 and big-serving Canadian who, due to injury, has seen his ranking plummet to 317. De Minaur won their only previous encounter in straight sets in Brisbane six years ago.

2 16-Caroline Garcia
(Fra) v Naomi Osaka
(Jpn)

Two-time Open champion Osaka returns to grand slam action for the first time since 2022 after taking all of last year off with the birth of her first child. Drawing world No. 20 Garcia is a sawfully tough, with the Frenchwoman winning all her United Cup matches last week, besides a three-setter against world No. 1 Iga Swiatek. Osaka won in straight sets in their only previous meeting, at the Australian Open in 2021.

Brutal Christmas tradition shows Alex's

'TIS THE
SEASON

Courtney Walsh

Fox Sports

As a boy Alex de Minaur would sit on the family couch binge watching old videos of the greats of the game.

For the past few years, the 24-year-old has roused himself from bed on Christmas Day, grabbed his racquets and set off for the home of Australian player and coach Tony Roche for a training session.

A decent feed is always in the offing, but only after he has earned his appetite.

From the age of 13, when de Minaur decided to dedicate himself to tennis, he has made sacrifices to ensure he gets the best out of himself every time he steps out on court. And going to work on Christmas Day is another. But he considers it the rarest of gifts.

Roche was one of those greats his dad Anibal, a restaurateur and car wash operator, would make him watch whenever he managed to track down footage of former champions.

In an extended interview with Fox Cricket broadcaster Mark Howard's podcast The Howie Games to be released on Thursday, de Minaur said it was a privilege to learn from legends.

"It is pretty surreal, to be honest. I've been fortunate enough to do Davis Cup weeks with him. I get to learn from him constantly," de Minaur said.

"I have been going to practice at his house on Christmas Day (for) the last three or four years. It is a bit of a tradition. It is pretty surreal to me to be in this position.

"It is still a novelty for me from the first day to now. Every time I get to spend some time with him, I get to learn some more stuff, which is pretty cool for someone in my position."

It is now 17 years since de Minaur played his first competitive match in a



Alex de Minaur has a practice hit yesterday ahead of tonight's clash with Milos Raonic (right).
Pictures: Michael Klein, AFP

tournament held at White City, a historic but now decrepit site in Sydney that was once host to the Open.

In the midst of a family holiday back to Australia, he thought it would be good fun. But from the first point he was hooked on the thrill of competing. He wanted to win every single point.

It is a desire that has driven him from that moment, from a childhood where his family bounced back and forth between Sydney and Alicante (Valencia, Spain) through fiscal challenges and ultimately into a life spent touring the world while representing his nation with distinction.

No Australian man has won the Australian Open since Mark Edmondson in 1976.

Grand slam champions Pat Cash and Lleyton Hewitt, a mentor of de Minaur, came close as finalists, while former world No. 1 Pat Rafter was a semi-finalist as well.

Nick Kyrgios, a one-time national teammate and doubles partner, is the best-performed local man over the past decade as a quarter-finalist in 2015. But he is again sitting on the sidelines this year due to injury.

The burden of local hopes rests again on the shoulders of de Minaur, who has effectively been Australia's leading man from his late teens, the fine

2022 flourish of Kyrgios aside. It is something he actively embraces. He may not possess the pop and pizzazz of Kyrgios, but nor is he anywhere near as polarising.

De Minaur's dash around the court, the brilliance of his reflexes, the cut and thrust of his multifaceted game and the burning ambition within have made him a winner.

He is a headline act. His fourth round dash against 10-time Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic last year drew a television audience nationally of 730,000, which was the third highest for the tournament.

And his star is ascending. About 15 months ago, he had

zero wins from 18 outings against top-10 ranked rivals. Then he knocked off former US Open champion Daniil Medvedev in the Paris Masters.

Over the past 12 months, the wins against the games' best have come with increasing regularity to the point where he is the newest member of the Top 10 club.

He knocked off Djokovic for the first time in the United Cup in Perth a fortnight ago in between triumphs over top American Taylor Fritz and German Alexander Zverev, another who has had his measure in the past.

There is nothing de Minaur, who faces former Wimbledon

AO

AUSSIES
IN ACTION1 Storm Hunter (Aus) v
Sara Errani (Ita)

KIA Arena, 11am
World No. 1 doubles star Storm Hunter fought her way into the main draw through qualifying and now faces former world No. 5 Errani, who is in the twilight of her career at 36 and

ranked No. 101 in the world. Hunter could not ask for better form and a better opportunity to reach the second round for the first time in six attempts in the singles draw in Melbourne.



STORM HUNTER

2 Alexei Popyrin (Aus) v
Marc Polmans (Aus)

John Cain Arena, 2nd match
Popyrin holds the edge here, winning their only previous encounter in 2018 and coming off his finest year on the ATP tour where his ranking rose to 43 in the world. He shocked everyone when he upset world No. 9 Taylor Fritz here. South African-born Polmans, the world No. 156, was handed a wildcard for this event.

3 Magdalena Frech (Pol) v
Daria Saville (Aus)

John Cain Arena, 4th match
Saville was awarded a controversial AO wildcard ahead of Arina Rodionova for the final spot in the draw, the world No. 195 fighting her way back after a wretched injury run. A semi-final appearance in Hobart last week gives hope Saville can overcome Poland's world No. 72 who lost to Hobart winner Emma Navarro last week.

4 Omar Jasika (Aus) v
9-Hubert Hurkacz (Pol)

John Cain Arena, 4th match
Left-handed Aussie qualifier ranked 341 who is having a bit of a renaissance at 26 and comes in with strong form of three qualifying wins. But the former junior US boys champion has the unfortunate luck of drawing a top 10 star in Hurkacz who won two ATP titles and reached the fourth round of the AO last year.

'Hewitt mentality' for success



Demon Canada do if he returns well

Callum Dick

One of the fastest serves in tennis history stands between Alex de Minaur and the second round of the Australian Open.

With a top speed of 249.9km/h, the missile that is Milos Raonic's serve has tormented the ATP Tour for more than a decade – and the Aussie No.1 is its next target.

Raonic beat Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer and Andy Murray while they were in their prime and gave Novak Djokovic one of his sternest tests in his run to the 2021 Australian Open title.

De Minaur might have chuckled when he saw his name placed next to the world No.317.

Raonic, a former Wimbledon runner-up and five-time Australian Open quarter-finalist, is hardly the cushy opening-round draw often expected for one of the top seeds.

After almost two years away from the tour battling injury, the 33-year-old Canadian is back up and running.

The former world No.3 has saved his best tennis for Melbourne Park, where he has a 34-11 win-loss record and has reached the fourth round or better eight times.

One man who knows how dangerous Raonic can be is retired Aussie star John Millman.

Millman rated Raonic's serve as the most difficult he faced.

He said in one of their clashes

at Wimbledon, the Canadian "nearly put me into the stands".

"I went up to near the baseline and he put one through me that nearly made me fall over," Millman said.

However, Millman believes de Minaur's skill set also makes him a match-up nightmare for Raonic.

"Alex is going to have to play really well – it's not the easiest first-one up, that's for sure," Millman said.

"I used to hate having to face those big servers, especially early in a tournament. Sometimes the game can get taken out of your hands."

"The good news for Australian fans is that last year, Alex was the fifth-best returner on tour. He's going to have to return well but when you think of all the people on tour, to be the fifth best stacks up well against someone like Milos."

Last year, only the world top four – Djokovic, Carlos Alcaraz, Daniil Medvedev and Jannik Sinner – had better returns of service than de Minaur.

"Milos is a great server and his game is built around his serve," Millman said.

"Having said that, there are still some question marks as to his fitness level."

"We have to go back three or four years to when he was playing consistently on tour but there is a lot of class about him. You don't make the final of Wimbledon by accident."

DE MINAUR v RAONIC
First round, RLA tonight
10-Alex de Minaur (Aus)
v Milos Raonic (Can)
24 AGE 33
10 RANKING 317
7 CAREER TITLES 8
\$11.6m PRIZEMONEY \$20.5m
HEAD TO HEAD
De Minaur leads 1-0

finalist Milos Raonic on Rod Laver Arena on Monday night, loves more than giving his all for his country.

De Minaur is the 109th Australian to represent the country in Davis Cup. That number is tattooed on his chest.

He convinced Roche, a French Open champion who has coached Hewitt, Pat Rafter, Roger Federer and Ivan Lendl, to ink his own number, 54, onto his skin as well.

Australia gave de Minaur and his family a lifeline when the global financial crisis hit and crunched the family's car wash business in Alicante. He has never forgotten the assistance and is determined

to repay the faith.

It is why, unlike Kyrgios and Bernard Tomic, he will always turn up for his country, a nation he has led to the last two Davis Cup finals.

"As you get to know me and get to see some of the decisions in my life, for me, when I was in a time of need and I needed help, Australia was there with open arms and had my back from day one," de Minaur said.

"That, for me, is the biggest thing ever. I am a loyal guy and these things matter to me. From then ... it was the easiest decision ever (to come back to Sydney). When I needed help, when I was definitely struggling, Australia was

there. Tennis Australia was there to help me out ... and I will do everything in my power to make them proud."

DISARMING THE MISSILE
Milos "The Missile" Raonic is the first man standing in his way at Melbourne Park.

De Minaur was able to snare a big win over Raonic as a teenager in Brisbane by taking on the rise a serve so powerful that it almost cut his compatriot John Millman in two during a dash at Wimbledon a few years ago.

"In the first game of the match, I decided to receive first. Everyone is telling me "Raonic, his serve is unbelievable. Watch out. Give

yourself some room. Give yourself some time," de Minaur recalled during The Howie Games Podcast.

"So I decided to stand on the baseline. To stand even closer than I normally would, thinking 'Let's go. I'm ready. What have you got?'"

"The first serve was 237 km/h (at my) body and it almost hit me on the full. I was like, whatever, I'll do it again. The next point, he does the same thing. And I thought, 'This could be a long day, but I am not going to shy away from this.'"

A couple of games later, he was able to pounce.

FULL STORY, FOXSPORTS.COM.AU

AO DAY 2 schedule

TODAY'S WEATHER Max 28. Cloudy

ROD LAVER ARENA

12pm

Anna Karolina Schmiedlova (Svk) v 4-Coco Gauff (US)
LL-Zizou Bergs (Bel) v
7-Stefanos Tsitsipas (Gre)

7pm

10-Alex de Minaur (Aus) v
Milos Raonic (Can)
16-Caroline Garcia (Fra) v
Naomi Osaka (Jpn)

MARGARET COURT ARENA

12pm

Terence Atmane (Fra) v
3-Daniil Medvedev
Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova v
21-Donna Vekic (Cro)

7pm

6-Ons Jabeur (Tun) v Yulia
Starodubtseva (Ukr)
27-Felix Auger-Aliassime
(Can) v Dominic Thiem (Aut)

JOHN CAIN ARENA

11am

Dayana Yastremska (Ukr) v
7-Marketa Vondrousova (Cze)
Alexei Popyrin (Aus) v
Marc Polmans (Aus)

Magdalena Frech (Pol) v
Daria Saville (Aus)

5pm

Omar Jasika (Aus) v
9-Hubert Hurkacz (Pol)

KIA ARENA

Storm Hunter (Aus) v

Sara Errani (Ita)
20-Adrian Mannarino (Fra) v
Stan Wawrinka (Swi)
Andy Murray (GB) v
30-Tomas Martin Etcheverry
(Arg)

Linda Fruhvirtova (Cze) v 10-
Beatriz Haddad Maia (Bra)

1573 ARENA

19-Elina Svitolina (Ukr)
v Taylah Preston (Aus)
Roberto Bautista Agut (Spa)
v 16-Ben Shelton (US)
Daniel Altmaier (Ger) v
15-Karen Khachanov
24-Anhelina Kalinina (Ukr) v
Arantxa Rus (Ned)

COURT 3

Linda Noskova (Cze) v
31-Marie Bouzkova (Cze)
17-Ekaterina Alexandrova v
Laura Siegemund (Ger)
Aleksandar Vukic (Aus) v
Jordan Thompson (Aus)
Rinky Hijikata (Aus) v
24-Jan Lennard Struff (Ger)

COURT 5

Patrick Kypson (US) v
Emil Ruusuvuori (Fin)
Fiona Ferro (Fra) v
McCartney Kessler (US)
Jaqueline Cristian (Rou) v
Katerina Sinikova (Cze)

Alexandre Muller (Fra) v
Hugo Grenier (Fra)

COURT 6

Kayla Day (US) v
Viktoria Tomova (Bul)
James Duckworth (Aus) v
Luca Van Assche (Fra)
Yannick Hanfmann (Ger) v
Gael Monfils (Fra)
Taylor Townsend (US) v
Paula Badosa (Spa)

COURT 7

Yanina Wickmayer (Bel) v
Varvara Gracheva (Fra)
Kaja Juvan (Slo) v
23-Anastasia Potapova
Denis Shapovalov (Can) v
Jakub Mensik (Cze)
Zhizhen Zhang (Chn) v
Federico Coria (Arg)

COURT 8

Nadia Podoroska (Arg) v
Tamara Zidansek (Slo)
Constant Lestienne (Fra) v
23-Alejandro Davidovich
Fokina (Spa)
Mayar Sherif (Egy) v
25-Elise Mertens (Bel)
21-Ugo Humbert (Fra) v
David Goffin (Bel)

COURT 12

Roberto Carballes Baena
(Spa) v Hugo Gaston (Fra)
Tatjana Maria (Ger) v
Camila Osorio (Col)
Maximilian Marterer (Ger) v
Nuno Borges (Por)
Mirra Andreeva v
Bernarda Pera (US)

COURT 13

Flavio Cobolli (Ita) v
18-Nicolas Jarry (Chi)
Diana Shnaider v
26-Jasmine Paolini (Ita)
Christopher Eubanks (US) v
Taro Daniel (Jpn)
Viktoria Golubic (Swi) v
15-Veronika Kudermetova

COURT 14

25-Lorenzo Musetti (Ita) v
Benjamin Bonzi (Fra)
Marta Kostyuk (Ukr) v
Claire Liu (US)
Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) v
Anastasia Zakharova
Miomir Kecmanovic (Srb) v
Yosuke Watanuki (Jpn)

COURT 17

29-Sebastian Korda (US) v
Vit Koprieva (Cze)
Rebeka Masarova (Spa) v
Allaksandra Sasnovich
Alejandro Tabilo (Chi) v
Aleksandar Kovacevic (US)
Anna Kalinskaya v
Katie Volynets (US)
*All courts 11am unless noted

5 19-Elina Svitolina (Ukr) v Taylah Preston (Aus)

1573 Arena, 11am
Perth teenager Preston secured her AO wildcard with four ITF tournament wins in 2023, proving she is one of Australia's emerging talents. But her AO debut could not get much tougher. Ukrainian Svitolina is coming off a final at Auckland and is twice a former quarter-finalist here in Melbourne.



TAYLAH PRESTON

6 Aleksandar Vukic (Aus) v Jordan Thompson (Aus)

Court 3, 3rd match
World No. 47 Thompson beat Vukic in straight sets just over a week ago in Brisbane, then claimed the scalp of Rafael Nadal on his way to the semi-finals. It's been four years since 29-year-old Thompson has won through the second round of the AO. Vukic, 27, is coming off a career-best year.

7 Rinky Hijikata (Aus) v 24-Jan Lennard Struff (Ger)

Court 3, 4th match
The German won their only previous encounter, qualifying in Phoenix last year, but 22-year-old Hijikata is on the rise and will fancy his chances against the 33-year-old world No. 24. A fourth round at the US Open proved to Hijikata he belongs at this level. Struff has reached the second round of the AO just once in nine appearances, back in 2018.

8 James Duckworth (Aus) v Luca Van Assche (Fra)

Court 6, 2nd match
The mighty Duck faces an awkward first up clash here, with 19-year-old French talent making his second appearance at the AO after two Challenger tournaments wins in 2023. Duckworth had two Challenger victories himself last year and will be looking to reach the AO second round for the first time since 2021.



JAMES DUCKWORTH

DJOKER'S EARLY SCARE

Dropped set, wobbles, but a win's a win

Callum Dick

Is he vulnerable or just playing with us?

Novak Djokovic's Australian Open title defence is alive but only barely after the 10-time champion scraped through his opening round clash 6-2 6-7 (5) 6-3 6-4 against unknown Croatian qualifier Dino Prizmic on Sunday night.

Fans who might have expected a swift smashing were instead treated to a four-set firecracker that at one stage threatened to produce the unthinkable.

At four hours and one minute, it marked the longest grand slam first-round match of Djokovic's career.

Not since unseeded South Korean Hyeon Chung toppled him in the 2018 quarters had Djokovic looked as unsettled as he did after Prizmic claimed the second set in a tie-break.

The 38-year-old, who grew up idolising Djokovic and was not yet born when the Serbian made his Australian Open debut in 2005, drew a torrent of emotions out of the world No.1 with a display that had some in the stands daring to dream.

While Djokovic roared expletives at the fans he has long claimed to love, Prizmic drew chants of support.



Novak Djokovic was made to work hard for his win over Croatian teenager Dino Prizmic (inset) on Rod Laver Arena last night. Pictures: Michael Klein

"Let's go Dino" rang out around Rod Laver Arena – the court on which Djokovic had built his legacy as the greatest of all time – as Prizmic attempted an unlikely fourth-set comeback that fell just short. This wasn't a case of a heavyweight staying in second gear to conserve energy against a lowly foe; Djokovic

was pushed to perform. Prizmic at one stage led 3-1 in the third and had further break points later in the set, only for the mental might of Djokovic to overpower the grand slam debutant.

Regardless it was a shocking series of events given the young Croat had only a week earlier fallen to a meek straight-sets defeat in the second round of the Canberra Challenger.

This won't be the last time

we hear of Prizmic, though with the carrot of a shock upset snatched away the focus must settle back on Djokovic.

Next up is a second-round date with one of Alexei Popyrin or Marc Polmans.

Both Aussies, who will face off on Monday, will have watched with interest as Djokovic struggled to dispatch his lowly first round opponent.

The 24-time grand slam champion on Saturday declared his injured wrist was "pain-free" and had not troubled him in practice.

That wrist woe is now a catch-22 for Djokovic.

If he is indeed untroubled by the injury, then the almost 50 unforced errors could speak to a greater issue – form.

But if those uncharacteristic unforced errors were brought on by the wrist pain, it will only get worse from here.

A four-hour first-round showdown against a teenage qualifier was not the kind of fitness test Djokovic would have wanted to open his title defence. But it could be the one he needed.

Diary of a Sinner marks champ

Jannik Sinner admitted he already has half an eye on a semi-final clash against Novak Djokovic after a hard-fought victory over Dutchman Botić van de Zandschulp on Sunday.

The 22-year-old Italian fourth seed enjoyed a breakthrough 2023, winning his first Masters title, in Toronto, and reaching the championship match against Djokovic at the ATP Finals.

It sparked expectations that it is only a matter of time before he wins a major and he came through a tough encounter at Melbourne Park to open his 2024 account, beating the 59th-ranked Dutchman 6-4 7-5 6-3 on Rod Laver Arena.

"Good for me to get out there, and obviously it was not easy. I won in straight sets, but it was not that easy," he said.

"He played well, he served well, but I managed somehow to get the breaks in important moments. I'm happy to be back on court to compete, and that's what I love to do. So it was a nice feeling."

It was Sinner's first competitive match of the year after he opted against playing a warm-up tournament, but he showed few signs of rust. He broke Van de Zandschulp's opening service game and won the first set in 46 minutes.

Should he keep the momentum going, 10-time champion Djokovic looms ahead.

"It's Sunday today, it's so long to go. But for sure you are aiming for these matches," he said of possibly meeting the Serbian superstar.

"I don't want to say much more about this at the moment because I feel that there is still a lot of work to do to get to this point. So yeah, let's see. Nobody can tell the future."

Sinner was pleased that six of his diehard fans who dress as carrots made it to Melbourne.

The "Carota Boys" fan group has more than 70,000 followers on Instagram and sell orange T-shirts that read "Let's Go Sinner, Let's Go".

"I was not expecting them to come here, but it's nice to see them in the stands," he said. "They are getting more and more famous than I am."

Rublev has a Wild day

Chris Cavanagh

Andrey Rublev said admitting to himself that opponent Thiago Seyboth Wild deserved to beat him helped free his mind and battle back from the brink to reach the Australian Open second round on Sunday.

"I was, like, 'OK, he deserves to win,'" he said after a marathon five-setter, prevailing in a tiebreaker on Margaret Court Arena, 7-5 6-4 3-6 4-6 7-6 (10-6).

"I said 'At least just finish the match without saying anything, and that's it'."

"And somehow those words

give me a bit of relief. As soon as I said them I had a chance, because I was lucky that he didn't make a first serve. I returned really well and really clean, and I was able to come back."

The Russian – ranked No.5 in the world – had been 4-1 down in the 10-point tiebreaker before winning nine of the next 11 points to take the match in 3 hours 42 minutes.

Rublev had earlier held three match points as he led 6-5 in the fifth set but Brazilian Seyboth Wild – ranked No.78 – hit back on serve to take the contest to a tiebreaker.

Rublev fell down to the court in joy after the final point.

"I will not forget this match," he said. "Thiago is a super-dangerous player."

Rublev is a two-time quarter-finalist at the Open – including last year when he lost to eventual champion Novak Djokovic. But he has never progressed past the quarter-final of any grand slam despite reaching that part of the draw nine times.

He will face a second-round match against the winner of today's clash between American Christopher Eubanks and Japan's Taro Daniel.

Wozniacki is back for more

Former Australian Open champion Caroline Wozniacki said she hoped her young children were in bed after progressing to the second round when Magda Linette retired injured on Sunday night.

Wozniacki, who won the title in Melbourne in 2018, came out of retirement last year and reached the last-16 at the US Open.

She is also not back just to make up the numbers, declaring "why not me?" about her push to challenge for another Australian Open crown.

The Danish star, 33, was



Magda Linette and Caroline Wozniacki after the match.

leading 6-2, 2-0 when the Polish 20th seed was forced to quit the match on Margaret Court Arena just after 8pm.

"This is not how I wanted to finish it and I really hope that

it's not too serious and that she'll recover soon," Wozniacki said.

The former world No.1, who retired in 2020, said it felt good to be back at Melbourne Park six years after she lifted her only Grand Slam title.

"I feel at home here," she said. "The court brings back amazing memories."

But she was keen that two-year-old Oliva and one-year-old James would be fast asleep by the time she got back to her accommodation. "They are used to going to bed at 7.30pm on the dot," she said.

RESULTS
DAY 1
THE SEEDS
MEN

1-Novak Djokovic (Srb) d
Dino Prizmic (Cro)
6-2 6-7 (5/7) 6-3 6-4
4-Jannik Sinner (Ita) d Botić
van de Zandschulp (Ned)
6-4 7-5 6-3
5-Andrey Rublev d
Thiago Wild (Bra)
7-5 6-4 3-6 4-6 7-6 (10/6)
12-Taylor Fritz (US) d Facundo
Diaz Acosta (Arg)
4-6 6-3 3-6 6-2 6-4
26-Sebastian Baez (Arg) d
J.J. Wolf (US) 3-6 6-2 6-3 3-0 ret

WOMEN

8-Maria Sakkarī (Gre) d Nao
Hibino (Jpn) 6-4 6-1
9-Barbora Krejčíková (Cze) d
Mai Hontama (Jpn) 2-6 6-4 6-3
Amanda Anisimova (US) d 13-
Ludmila Samsonova 6-3 6-4
Caroline Wozniacki (Den) d 20-
Magda Linette (Pol) 6-2 2-0 ret
28-Lesya Tsurenko (Ukr) d
Lucia Bronzetti (Ita) 3-6 7-5 6-3
Diane Parry (Fra) d 30-Wang
Xinyu 6-3 2-6 6-3
32-Leylah Fernandez (Can) d
Sara Bejlek (Cze) 7-6 (7/5) 6-2

AUSSIES

MEN

22-Francisco Cerundolo (Arg)
d Dane Sweeney
3-6 6-3 6-4 2-6 6-2
Matteo Arnaldi (Ita) d Adam
Walton 7-6 (7/5) 6-2 6-4
Christopher O'Connell d
Cristian Garin (Chile)
3-6 7-5 4-6 6-17-5
Daniel Galan (Col) d Jason
Kubler 2-6 6-3 7-6 (7/3) 4-6
7-6 (10/8)

Italian out
of Open

Former top-10 star Matteo Berrettini pulled out of the Australian Open on Sunday on the eve of a blockbuster first-round clash with Greek star Stefanos Tsitsipas.

"Wishing @MattBerrettini a speedy recovery after being forced to withdraw from Melbourne with a right foot injury," the ATP Tour said on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Seventh-seed Tsitsipas will instead face Belgian lucky loser Zizou Bergs.

Anisimova
back fresh

Amanda Anisimova said she was feeling refreshed and enjoying herself after upsetting 13th-seeded Ludmila Samsonova on her return to Grand Slam tennis following a break to deal with mental health issues.

The 22-year-old American came out on top 6-3 6-4, two weeks after returning to action in Auckland.

"I'm here and feeling good, so we made it," she said.

Anisimova stepped back from the sport in May, saying it was "unbearable" being at tennis tournaments, citing mental health issues.

"The most important thing is that I feel a lot more refreshed. I'm enjoying practising. I'm enjoying every second that I'm out there," she said.

"Even when I was down today, I was still just enjoying the challenge."

Aussie's epic advance

Chris Cavanagh

One-time Sydney boat cleaner Christopher O'Connell has started the Australian Open with a wet sail, reaching the second round of the tournament for just the third time in his career.

The 29-year-old made a sluggish start to his first-round dash with Chile's Cristian Garin, losing two of the first three sets.

But O'Connell eventually got a home crowd onboard and got himself going on his

way to winning a five-set marathon, 3-6 7-5 4-6 6-17-5.

The match spanned a whopping 4 hours and 21 minutes. There was controversy during the third set, when the chair umpire made an incorrect call that there had been a second bounce before a ball which O'Connell returned.

The Australian pleaded his case that the ball had only bounced once, with replays showing the call was indeed wrong.

O'Connell briefly threw away tennis in 2018, taking a

six-month spell to clean boats on Sydney's northern beaches after being hampered by injuries early in his career.

Consequently, he held a world ranking of 1185 at the end of the 2018 season.

Since then, O'Connell has risen back up the rankings and reached a career-high ranking of 53 last September.

His goal for 2024 is to break into the top-50 for the first time, with the first-round grand slam win set to put him well on his way.

O'Connell will face the win-

ner of Monday's match between 16th-seed American Ben Shelton and Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut.

Earlier, Australian wildcard Adam Walton also lost in his grand slam debut, after suffering a straight-sets defeat on the opening day at Melbourne Park.

The first local hope on court at the Australian Open, Walton made a strong start against Italian Matteo Arnaldi before falling 7-6 (7-5) 6-2 6-4 on Kia Arena. Walton, 24, pushed Arnaldi in an opening

set tiebreak, but the world No.41 swept past the unseeded Australian – ranked 176 in the world – in the second set.

The Italian sealed his first-round win with an ace, to take his tally to 16-1 for the match.

After dispatching one Australian, Arnaldi will face the winner of the clash between Alex de Minaur and Milos Raonic in the second round.

The 22-year-old broke into the top 50 for the first time after reaching the fourth round at the US Open in September last year.

Sweeny
has
game to
stretch
best

Australian Dane Sweeney at full stretch during his five-set first-round loss against Francisco Cerundolo on Sunday. Picture: Michael Klein

Rebecca Williams

Argentinian seed Francisco Cerundolo urged Australian qualifier Dane Sweeney to "trust" his game after the unheralded local hope fell just short of a first-round upset in his grand slam debut at Melbourne Park.

In his first appearance on the big stage at the Open, Sweeney won plenty of fans after pushing Cerundolo to a fifth set, before losing 6-3 3-

6 4-6 6-2 2-6 to the No.22 seed on John Cain Arena.

The 22-year-old from the Sunshine Coast with a Lleyton Hewitt-esque fist pump, 'C'mon' cries and the back-to-front cap made a hot start to take the first set.

Cerundolo hit back to take the next two sets, before Sweeney sent the match into a decider.

But the Australian, who is ranked 257th in the world, was unable to match

Cerundolo in the final set – the first time he had been pushed to five sets.

Sweeney impressed with his hustle, skidding and sliding around the court chasing balls, snapping his shoelaces and finishing with grazes on his knee and knuckles.

"This morning I just wanted to make sure it was a good match for everyone that came down to watch me," Sweeney said. "I'm

happy – at least it was a good match."

Relieved to get through to the next round, Cerundolo praised Sweeney's effort and urged him to back his game to advance on the tour.

"It was a really tough battle. Dane is playing unbelievable, he is playing really good," Cerundolo said.

"I was with no confidence at all, I started the year pretty bad the previous two weeks and today it was a real

challenge for me and I am happy because I got the win, but it was super difficult.

"I told him (Sweeney) that at the net that he is playing really good, he has to trust himself because he has the tennis, it's a matter of playing, getting some wins, confidence in yourself."

Earlier, Brisbane wildcard Adam Walton suffered a 7-6 (7-5) 6-2 6-4 defeat by Italian Matteo Arnaldi in his grand slam debut match.



Jason Kubler

Heartbreak as Kubler loses in five hours

Chris Cavanagh

Aussie battler Jason Kubler has fallen short of securing a second-round Australian Open berth after losing a five-set battle for the ages against Colombian Daniel Elahi Galan.

Kubler, who received a wildcard entry for the tournament, trailed two sets to one after losing a third-set tiebreaker to Galan.

But the Australian put his fighting spirit on display to take the match all the way.

Kubler looked to have the upper hand as he held a 4-2 advantage during the fifth set, before Galan steadied to win the next three games and eventually take the battle to a 10-point tiebreaker.

Galan held a 7-2 advantage during that tiebreaker before Kubler fought back again to trail only 9-8.

An unforced error from Kubler on a 12-shot rally ended his hopes.

Galan's triumph took a staggering 4hrs 59min to complete as he prevailed 2-6 6-3 7-6 (7-3) 4-6 7-6 (10-8).

The gripping third and fifth sets each lasted the length of an average big screen movie, clocking in at 80 minutes.

"It was certainly a difficult match," Galan said.

"Jason (is an) amazing play-

er and it was a very tough battle, but I'm really happy I was able to get through.

"(I'm) super tired. I was starting to cramp in the tiebreak, in the last one. But at the end, it's just, 'Try to keep going'. It was tough for both of us and in the end, I'm hoping the Australian crowd is with me and not against me."

It will be the first time Galan has featured in the second round of the Australian Open.

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NOT A
JOKEInside Smith's
opening pitch
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NEW
TEAM
PAGE 33

FIRST-DAY HEROICS

O'YEAH!

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KUBLER HEARTBREAK AFTER FIVE-HOUR MARATHON P43

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